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NOW META, AMAZON NIX DIVERSITY PROGRAMS AHEAD OF JAN 20

Tech giants join Ford, McDonald's, John Deere and Walmart in scaling back their diversity, equity and inclusion programs ahead of Trump inauguration

META OUTLINES SWEEPING CHANGES TO DEI

Meta outlined widespread changes, including elimination of its diverse slate hiring approach and the disbanding of its DEI team in an internal memo, which was leaked online. The move by US companies comes after recent Supreme Court decisions on how courts will approach DEI going ahead. Amazon said it is winding down outdated programs

DEI INVITES IRE IN THE LOS ANGELES WILDFIRE

Besides the SC decision, the move by companies comes as Trump, who has long riled against tech giants for being biased towards him, is set to become the president
Elon Musk targeted DEI during the Los Angeles wildfire. He said, "They prioritised DEI over saving lives and homes"

81

ANTI-DEIBILLS IN COLLEGES WHICH HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED IN 28 STATES

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NTA exams may go UPSC way for better security

Would involve DM, SP to make the process of conducting entrance tests fully secure

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

THE government is mulling to conduct all entrance exams to higher education institutions (HEIs) using the UPSC model to ensure strict security and avoid any future allegations of cheating and mismanagement, highly placed sources said.

The Union education ministry is considering this approach so as to involve all state and district administrations during the entrance exams, which will be conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA). "Now, the government is thinking of conducting all entrance exams to HEIs using the UPSC model. The UPSC model means the district administration and the state government are involved in the entrance exam process," the source told this paper.

UPSC exam centres are heavily secured by district administrations, with the collector and superintendent of police involved in the entire process. The government is looking at applying the same rigour for conducting various entrance exams, which include CUET-UG, CUET-PG, JEE-MAINS, and NEET-UG. NEET-UG was mired in controversy following allegations of cheating and mismanagement last year.

The source said the entire state administration is involved in the UPSC exams. "This will help make the entire exam procedure much more secure as the state administration will be



Why big reforms

A series of reforms are being undertaken so as to make NTA a globally-recognised exam body. "NTA handles one crore students. This is huge as compared to any other country. It will increase," the source said

part of the process. The government's thinking is to conduct all exams related to admission in such a fashion. Also, the state administration will feel part of the exam system."

The plan to adopt the UPSC model was discussed following the recommendation of the committee led by former ISRO Chairman Dr K Radhakrishnan. The committee was set up to suggest exam reforms, better security protocols, and their operation by the education ministry following the NEET-UG fiasco.

Last month, Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan had announced that NTA will focus solely on conducting entrance exams for admission to higher education institutions. The idea was to make the system "error-free".

To relocate tribals or not? K'taka forest officials face devil or deep sea dilemma

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA forest officials face the predicament of being between the devil and the deep sea over implementing the tribal relocation programme, protecting forests from becoming townships, and reducing man-animal conflict. They can neither implement the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's November 2024 orders to provide facilities (roads, power, water, sewage lines, educational institutions and BPL cards) to tribals inside forest areas; nor are they able to follow the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and Forest, Environment and Ecology department minister Eshwar Khandre directions to relocate tribals under the Forest Rights Act (FRA).



A tribal hamlet inside a forest in South Kodagu | EXPRESS

Forest officials have to choose between being a tool of political appeasement of providing facilities to tribals within the forests or face legal action against them if they do not relocate them. "On one hand, if forest officers do not implement the FRA, it leads to a rise in man-animal conflict, but if they

succumb to political pressure they are slapped with Lokayukta cases like it happened in Shivamogga where a complaint was filed against forest officials for not evicting people from 3,111 acres of forest land in Sagar and Soraba taluks. They are also threatened with criminal proceedings by MLAs for not providing essential amenities to tribals inside the forests, as was the case in South Kodagu," pointed a petitioner, fighting a case in Supreme Court, challenging the extent of land and grants to tribals in forests.

Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), BK Singh, said now the bigger problem is preventing the already relocated tribals from returning. Tribal families that were relocated

ed during 2008-2012 have started returning to haadis in Nagarhole Tiger Reserve (NTR) and are claiming ownership of lands outside and inside forests.

"Everyone is entitled to good life and facilities, but it should be outside the forests," said a former NTR official. "With drawing of power lines inside forests as part of facilities to be provided to the tribals, elephant electrocution incidents have increased. Tiger, leopard-human conflicts have also increased. Karnataka government enhanced the compensation to tribals from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 15 lakh, along with agricultural land and pucca house in the relocation package, but the political will to implement it is lacking now." P9

Maha shift as Uddhav's Sena to go it alone in civic body polls

SUDHIR SURYANVANSHI @ Mumbai

IN a seismic shift that threatens to upend Maharashtra's political landscape, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) has announced its decision to contest the upcoming local body elections on its own.

The decision was conveyed on Saturday by senior leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut, who said that the move to go solo has the backing of party chief Uddhav Thackeray and is meant to preserve the party's organisational growth and provide more opportunities for its workers. "We are confident in our strength and will fight the elections on our own ... what-

ever happens, will happen," he said.

The development raises questions about the future of the MVA coalition, particularly in light of the recent drubbing in the Maharashtra assembly elections, which saw the MVA suffer a humiliating defeat. The Shiv Sena (UBT) bagged just 9.96% of the vote share, a drop from the 16.72% it got in the Lok Sabha elections six months earlier.

The Congress has welcomed Shiv Sena (UBT)'s decision, with leaders citing the challenges of transferring votes between parties.

A senior Maharashtra Congress leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, acknowledged difficulties in securing votes from Shiv Sena (UBT) supporters, adding that the party now sees an opportunity for growth and expansion.



ROOF COLLAPSE AT U.P. STATION SITE

Rescue operation under way at Kannauj railway station after an under-construction building collapsed injuring 23 labourers. Six have been rescued, with three sustaining critical injuries. The incident happened around 2.30 pm on Saturday, when the shutter collapsed during casting of the roof. Officials said around 35 people were working at the site | P71 | P12

EXPRESS READ

18 workers hospitalised after gas leak in Karwar

Karwar: Eighteen workers were hospitalised with respiratory issues following a toxic gas leak at a factory in Binaga, Karwar taluk, Uttara Kannada district, on Saturday. The incident occurred at the caustic soda production unit of Grasim Industries at Binaga.

3 more bodies brought out of Assam mine

Guwahati: Divers on Saturday fished out bodies of three workers from a flooded coal mine in Dima Hasao district, Assam, where they had been trapped since January 6. With this recovery, bodies of four out of the nine workers stuck in the quarry have been found. P12

20 held for horrific rape of Kerala minor, hunt on for 40 more

JAISON WILSON @ Pathanamthitta

A day after the shocking revelation that more than 60 people had raped a minor over five years, the police arrested 20 people, including a juvenile. Police have registered six cases, including under the POCSO Act, with more to follow.

Based on the survivor's statement, the police had on Friday arrested five persons.

On Saturday, they arrested 15 more, including a 17-year-old boy. A special investigation team, headed by Pathanamthitta Deputy Superintendent of Police S Nandakumar, is questioning the accused.

The girl, who belongs to a Scheduled Caste community, had revealed her ordeal to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) members who subsequently informed the police. According to the survivor's account, the sexual abuse began when she was 13, with Subin, the son of her father's friend, luring her into a cycle of sexual exploitation that would continue for years.

When the girl turned 16,

NCW SEEKS STATUS REPORT IN THREE DAYS

The National Commission for Women has taken cognizance of the case and has directed the state police to submit a report within three days. The survivor is currently receiving counseling and support at a shelter home, police said.

Subin took her to a secluded rubber plantation and sexually assaulted her. He also recorded videos of the act on his phone. This was followed by regular sexual abuse, police said.

Subin's actions were enabled by a network of accomplices, who shared explicit visuals and videos of the girl. The perpetrators used the girl's father's mobile phone to communicate with her. Police have identified 40 individuals as potential perpetrators and are working to bring them to book.

District Superintendent of Police V G Vinod Kumar said legal action against the perpetrators will continue.



Arms and ammunition that were recovered from a forest near Kittaleguli village in Chikkamagaluru district

Naxals' surrender: Cops recover arms buried in C'magaluru forest

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chikkamagaluru

JAYAPURA police on Friday recovered weapons that were buried in a forest near Kittaleguli village in Chikkamagaluru district by six Naxals, who surrendered before Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Bengaluru a few days ago.

Sub-Inspector Ambareesh of Jayapura police station said one AK 56 assault rifle, three 303 rifles, one 12th bore single barrel gun, and one country-made pistol were recovered from the forest based on a tip-off from an informer.

The police also recovered an empty magazine and 11 bullets of AK 56 rifle, 133 bullets of 303 rifle, 24 12 bore cartridges, and 8 bullets of pistol.

A case has been registered in Jayapura police station under Section 3, 25 (1B) 7 and 25 (1 A) of the Arms Act, 1959.

Ambareesh told TNSE that a raid was conducted based on the information given by the informer. Investigations are on to know if the surrendered Naxals had buried more arms and ammunition in the forest.

Mundagaru Latha of Chikkamagaluru district, Vanajakshi Balehole, Sundari of Dakshina Kannada, Jeesha of Wayanad in Kerala, K Vasantha of Tamil Nadu, and Mareppa Aroli had surrendered before Siddaramaiah after the state government offered them a rehabilitation package. P6

Fan, fandom & Harish: Cricketing bridge between India & Australia

GOMESH S @ Sydney

IN terms of support, the Melbourne Cricket Ground almost looks like any other ground in India. There is a sea of blue in every corner and the din was as loud as one could hear back home. There have been times, especially during practice, when the Indian crowd outnumbered those from the home side Australia. The Border-Gavaskar Trophy is slowly turning out to be one of the most popular bilateral series in cricket. The MCG witnessed history when

373,691 fans poured in for the Boxing Day Tests throughout the five days of absorbing cricket. It incidentally recorded the highest attendance for any Test played in recent times.

With the growing Indian population, there has been a shift in the administrative set-up too. Harish Rao, who has roots, including cricketing ones in Chennai, became the first Indian-Australian to be appointed on the board of Cricket Victoria in its close to 150-year history. The Indian diaspora has become a pivotal part of Austral-

ian cricket and it is increasing every series.

It all started in 2022 when India-Pakistan T20 World Cup match was played in front of a capacity crowd of 90,293. India won and Australia realised the growing popularity among the Indian fans. The same year India and Australia signed the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement. Realising the significance of the Indian diaspora, Cricket Victoria contacted Harish, an Indian Australian Business leader, who founded the Australia India Chamber of Commerce, and was a past board member of



Melbourne crowd during the Boxing Day match

the Australia-India Institute before coming back to his cricketing roots.

"There's been a huge momentum in the Australia-India rela-

tionship over the last few years, especially after the signing of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement in 2022. That has filtered through to many

different aspects of relationships and certainly sport," Harish explains.

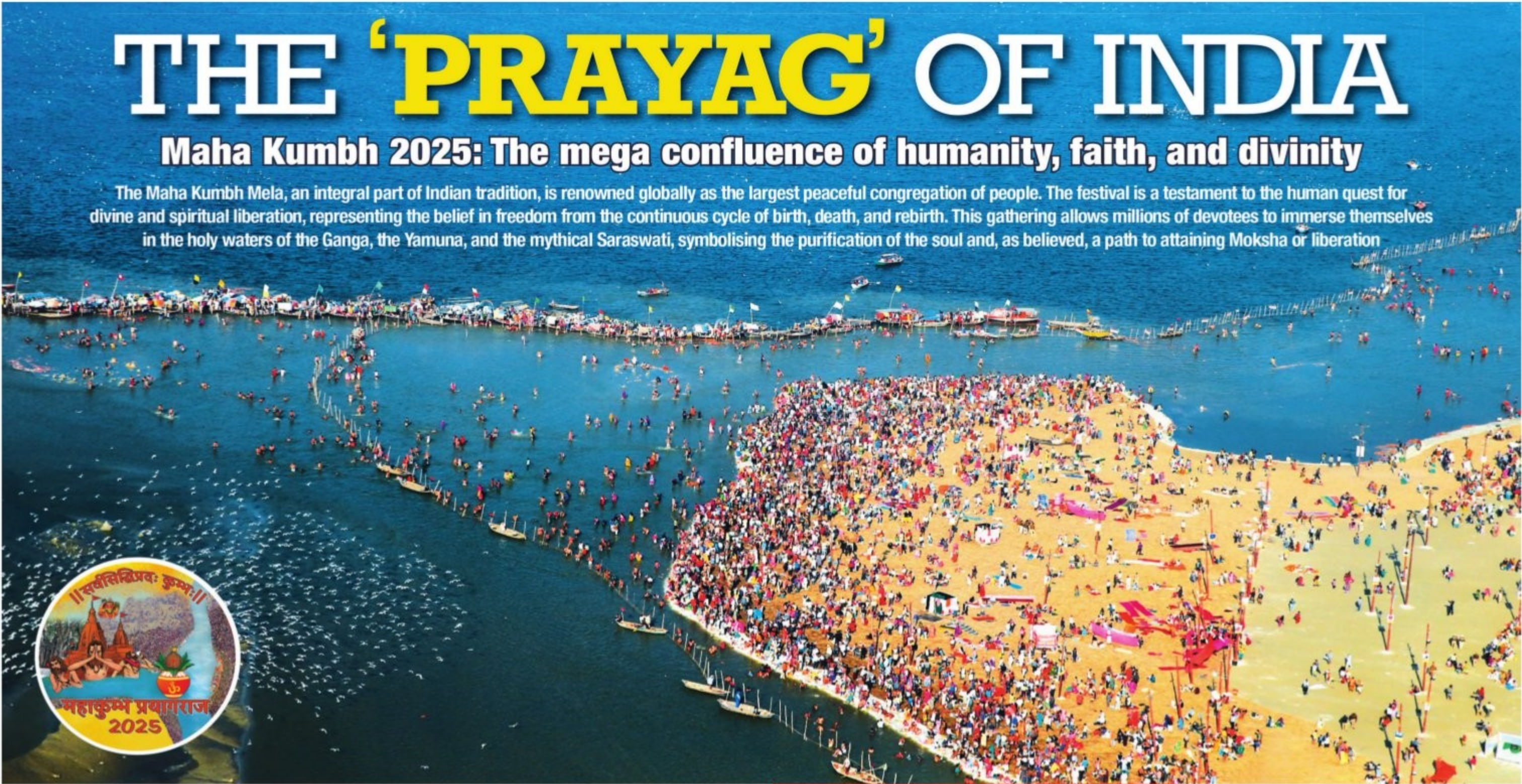
While Harish is on an exciting journey himself, it has also helped him connect to the sport which has been a big part of his family. His great grandfather B S Ramulu Naidu captained "Presidency Hindus" versus "Presidency Europeans" in the Madras Presidency match at the now M A Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai in 1908-09. Harish's grandfather, B S Badradi played first-class cricket for Madras alongside M J Gopalan, C P Johnstone, and A G Ram Singh. P15



Harish Rao

WITH THIS ISSUE

PARENTAL GUIDANCE
PLUS 12 PAGES
MAGAZINE



THE 'PRAYAG' OF INDIA

Maha Kumbh 2025: The mega confluence of humanity, faith, and divinity

The Maha Kumbh Mela, an integral part of Indian tradition, is renowned globally as the largest peaceful congregation of people. The festival is a testament to the human quest for divine and spiritual liberation, representing the belief in freedom from the continuous cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. This gathering allows millions of devotees to immerse themselves in the holy waters of the Ganga, the Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati, symbolising the purification of the soul and, as believed, a path to attaining Moksha or liberation



THE NECTAR OF SPIRITUALITY

The word *prayag* has traditionally meant 'a confluence of rivers'. For Prayagraj, it denotes the physical meeting point of the Ganga and the Yamuna in the city. According to ancient belief, a third river, the invisible Saraswati, also meets here with the Ganga and the Yamuna. It is also believed that Lord Brahma performed the very first sacrifice (yajna) at this place.

Triveni Sangam (or simply Sangam) is a more frequently used name for the confluence. Prayagraj (Sanskrit: Prayagaraja), meaning 'the king among



Prayag has been known as the greatest pilgrimage since the Rig Veda era. Prayagraj is famous for Madho temples also. The 12 Madho temples are:

- **Shareb Madho:** In the east of Triveni it is situated in the garden of 'Chatanaga', which had been the place of 'Vyas ji'. Shiv Puran was written here
- **Adveni Madho:** It is near the kothi of Ram Charan Agarwal at Daraganj. The idol of Lakshmi Narain sits in the temple
- **Manohar Madho:** In the temple of Darveshwar Nath, there is an idol of Lord Vishnu, which is called Manohar Madho
- **Chara Madho:** Situated in Agnikor-Arail
- **Gada Madho:** Situated near Chheoki Railway station
- **Adam Madho:** Situated in village Deoria
- **Anant Madho:** Approx two miles away from Khuldabad
- **Bindu Madho:** Situated in the vicinity of Draupadi Ghat
- **Ashi Madho:** Situated in the neighbourhood of Nagbasuki
- **Sankat Haran Madho:** Situated below Sandhya Vat
- **Vishnu or Adh Madho:** Situated in Arail
- **Vat Madho:** Situated near Akshyavat

the prayagas', is used as a term of respect to indicate that this confluence is the most splendid one of the five sacred confluences in India—the holy grounds for the Kumbh.

The Kumbh Mela is the largest and the most sacred fair of all, which takes place once in 12 years at Prayagraj. It is next being celebrated from January 13, 2025, to February 26, 2025. A sea of humanity lands up here for a dip in the Ganga on Mauni Amavasya. The mega fair is a melting pot of beliefs and ethnicities, drawing lakhs of Indians and foreigners alike. The curious mix of hectic commercial activity and intense seeking of spiritual solace has made this mega fair an object of study and awe.

SEARCH FOR DIVINE LIBERATION

Prayagraj is believed to be the most important pilgrimage centre for Hindus. Traditionally, river confluences are regarded as auspicious places, but at Sangam, the significance of the

township, complete with cottages, huts, platforms, civic facilities, administrative and security measures. It is organised immaculately by the UP government. The mega mela is especially renowned for the presence of an extraordinary array of religious ascetics—*sadhus* and *mahants*. Once astrologers have determined the propitious bathing time or *Kumbhayog*, the first to hit the water are the legions of *Naga Sadhus* or *Naga Babas*.

DIVE INTO SPIRITUALITY: THE SHAHI SNAN

JANUARY 13, 2025, TO FEBRUARY 26, 2025

Shahi Snan refers to the royal bath. It signifies the ritualistic bathing of holy men and devotees in the sacred waters of the river. The *Shahi Snan* holds immense significance as it is believed to cleanse one's soul of all past sins and pave the way towards *moksha* or liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

It is called a 'royal' bath because, on this day, the procession of the holy men belonging to various *akharas* (religious

The *Shahi Snan* of the Maha Kumbh Mela has gained global recognition. It is not just a religious gathering anymore; it has become a spectacle of faith, a cultural extravaganza, attracting not just devotees, but also tourists, researchers, and international media. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has inscribed the Kumbh Mela on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, further elevating its status globally

decked chariots, and musical bands.

TIMING AND ASTROLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF SHAHI SNAN

The timing of the *Shahi Snan*, or Royal Bath, is determined according to astrological calculations—holding immense spiritual value. The belief is that bathing in the holy river at this time will not only cleanse one's body but also purify the soul, leading the individual closer to attaining *Moksha*, or liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

A SPECTACLE FILLED WITH AWE

As a first-time attendee, the sheer scale and intensity of the Maha Kumbh Mela



CM Yogi Adityanath, along with other dignitaries, at the unveiling of the Maha Kumbh 2025 logo. The logo symbolises religious and economic prosperity, with the depiction of the Amrit Kalash, a sacred vessel from the mythological ocean churning

confluence is most pious because here, the holy Ganga, the Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati meet to become one.

According to legends, Vishnu was carrying a *kumbh* (pot) of *amrit* (nectar), when a scuffle broke out and four drops were spilled. They fell to earth at the four *tirthas* of Prayag, Haridwar, Nasik and Ujjain. The Sangam is known as *Tirtharaj*, the 'King of Tirthas' where the Maha Kumbh is held once in every twelve years—the greatest and the holiest of all.

The over month-long fair is marked by the construction of a massive, tented

orders) to the bathing ghats is no less than a royal parade. It's a spectacle filled with grandeur and fervour, with the air resounding with chants and the sight of resplendent palanquins, flower-

are overwhelming. It's not just a religious gathering; it's a spiritual journey and a cultural extravaganza.

The air vibrates with the resonating sounds of conch shells and bells, and



A holy dip at the Triveni Sangam holds immense spiritual significance for countless devotees

SHAHI SNAN DATES FOR MAHA KUMBH 2025

Paush Purnima	January 13, 2025
Makar Sankranti	January 14, 2025
Mauni Amavasya	January 29, 2025
Basant Panchami	February 3, 2025
Maghi Purnima	February 12, 2025
Maha Shivaratri	February 26, 2025



Tent city at Prayagraj during Kumbh 2019, equipped with several facilities for guests

the atmosphere is heavy with the scent of incense. *Naga Sadhus* charge into the river with thunderous shouts of 'Har Har Gange.' It's a moment of utter devotion, spirituality, and a testimony to the human spirit's strength and resilience.

THE BOON OF COMMERCE

More than 40 crore visitors are expected to visit the Maha Kumbh 2025. Even before the event, the number of tourists in Prayagraj has seen a significant rise, as confirmed by the state tourism department's data. According to the regional tourism department in Prayagraj, over 5 crore tourists visited the city in 2023. In the first six months of 2024 alone, more than 4.5 crore tourists have visited Sangam city. Additionally, 4,266 foreign tourists visited Prayagraj last year to experience its rich historical, cultural, and religious splendour. This year, in just six months, the number of foreign visitors has reached 3,894.

Similarly, 14,37,674 Indian tourists stayed in the city's hotels last year, along

with 2,771 foreign tourists. This year, in just six months, 19,41,426 Indian tourists have stayed in hotels, and the number of foreign guests has increased to 3,960.

Additionally, the Pran Pratishtha (consecration) of the new idol at the Shri Ramjanmabhoomi Mandir in Ayodhya also attracted tourists to Prayagraj. As an important stop on the Rampath Gaman Marg, many tourists who came to Ayodhya for the Pran Pratishtha visited Prayagraj in large numbers.

From tourism perspective, nearly 13,29,720 tourists visited Prayagraj last year to see historical sites like Anand Bhawan, Shaheed Chandrashekhar Azad Park, and Khuro Bagh. In just the first six months of this year, that number has increased to 13,79,280.

The direct impact of this has been on the local economy of the city. With rising footfall, businesses in hospitality, tour and travel, transportation, and local vendors have witnessed a surge in activity and earnings.

Larger than life: An aerial view of the Kumbh. It is a once-in-a-lifetime spectacle, something every travel and spiritual enthusiast must witness





MAHAKUMBH-2025

(13 JANUARY-26 FEBRUARY, 2025)

A CONFLUENCE OF FAITH, NATURE AND SUSTAINABILITY

DATES OF AMRIT SNAN

13th January 2025	Paush Purnima
14th January 2025	Makar Sankranti
29th January 2025	Mauni Amavasya
3rd February 2025	Basant Panchami
12th February 2025	Maghi Purnima
26th February 2025	Maha Shivaratri

Under the guidance of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Prayagraj Kumbh-2019 was successfully organised by the state government and the standards of cleanliness, security and order were established. Mahakumbh-2025 in Prayagraj must represent the 'New Uttar Pradesh' of 'New India', showcasing the administrative capacity, rich culture and tourism possibilities of the state.

-Yogi Adityanath
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

The Mahakumbh which is going to be held in Prayagraj for 45 days from 13th January to 26th February. There are so many reasons to come to India together asking the Indian diaspora to come to India during this time. First the NRI Day, then the Mahakumbh and after that the Republic Day, this is a kind of Triveni, a great opportunity to connect with the development and heritage of India.

-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

As Prayagraj prepares to host Mahakumbh 2025, the Double Engine government in UP is setting new benchmarks in environmental stewardship. The event focuses on creating a harmonious blend of spirituality and sustainability through groundbreaking initiatives.

- 4000 hectare of Mela area
 - 25 sectors
 - 1850 hectare of parking area
 - 201 roads being widened
 - Length of ghats 12km
 - A 400 km-long temporary road
 - Construction of 30 pontoon bridges
 - Beautification of 40 junctions & 48 roads
- More than 3,300 special trains
 - Over 7,000 New Buses
 - 550 Shuttle Buses
 - Over 200 Electric Buses
 - 1.60 lakh Tents
 - 1.50 lakh Toilet
 - Over 50,000 Police Personnel deployment
 - 2,750 CCTV Camera
 - Digital Media Center

Eco-Friendly Commute

- E-Vehicles for a Green Mahakumbh.
 - The state government has introduced 200 electric buses for devotees traveling to Prayagraj, on peak days, the buses will operate on six routes, while on regular days on 11 routes.
 - Google Voice assistance for international visitors simplifies navigation.
- App-based e-rickshaw and e-auto booking ensures smooth travel with fixed fares, with a focus on promoting a Green Mahakumbh.
 - Female-driven "Pink Service" prioritizes women's safety.
 - 300 e-rickshaws for Prayagraj city & Kumbh Mela.
 - All drivers are trained in customer service and behavior, with a focus on communication skills.

This will help visitors to get transport services at key locations such as railway stations, bus stands, airports, hotels and that too at fixed fare services.

Goal is to make local travel easier for individuals while also supporting the state's environmental preservation and sustainability initiatives.



Workforce for Cleanliness

- 20,000 Safai Mitras deployed for sanitation.
- 2,500 Gangadoots assigned to monitor toilet cleaning.
- 5,000 Kumbh Seva Mitras helping the devotees at the ghats, making devotees aware of cleanliness

Ganga Sevadoots

- 1,800 Ganga Sevadoots appointed to ensure cleanliness and maintain a plastic-free environment.
- Duties include inspecting toilets, roads, tent cities and filing complaints through an ICT system for irregularities.

Support for Sanitation Workers

Dedicated colonies for sanitation staff, with proper accommodation, food & timely wages.

Primary schools established for the children of sanitation workers. Safety kits, life jackets, and Safaimitra Suraksha Bima Yojana certificates provided.



Polythene-Free Mahakumbh

- Prasad and offerings now come in eco-friendly packaging.
- Dona (leaf bowls), pattal (leaf plates), kulhars (clay or earthen cups), besides jute and cloth bags being promoted to ensure a sustainable celebration.
- To make Mahakumbh 2025 a plastic-free and sustainable event, lakhs of plates and bags from across the country are being distributed to the devotees under the 'Ek Thali, Ek Bag' campaign.
- Public awareness campaign is underway to reinforce the message against plastic use is underway across Prayagraj as part of the Swachh Mahakumbh, Swachh Prayagraj initiative.
- The responsibility for manufacturing 60 crore Pattal-Dona and Kulhar has been entrusted to 14,000 SHG groups in 7 states.
- In the fair area, 10 shops in each of the 25 sectors, and more than 50 shops in Prayagraj city for cloth bags/jute bags.



Infrastructure and Waste Management

- **1.5 Lakh Toilets:** Installation of 1.5 lakh toilets, 5,000 urinals, 350 community toilets, and 10 toilet complexes built across the fair area.
- **Dustbins:** 1.25 lakh lined dustbins placed at 25-meter intervals, supported by 37.75 lakh liner bags.
- **Suction Vehicles:** Over 300 suction vehicles clean toilets and use jet sprays to eliminate foul odors.



Sustainability Through Bio-CNG Plant

- The state's first municipal solid waste-based Bio-CNG plant in Naini operational for Mahakumbh.
- Processes 200 tonne of wet waste daily to produce 21,500 kilograms of Bio-CNG and 209 tonne of organic compost.
- Reduces carbon emissions by 56,700 tonne annually, promoting the 'Waste to Wealth' vision.

Preserving Nature's Heritage Operation Shatakveer

- Yogi government launches a landmark initiative to protect century-old trees.
- Wildlife relocation plans ensure eco-friendly arrangements for Mahakumbh 2025.
- A budget allocation for wildlife rescue and natural habitat restoration.



Garbage Collection Vehicles

- 120 tear-hoppers with 1.2-1.4 tonne capacity.
- 40 compactor trucks with 7-9 tonne capacity, all monitored via GPS.
- **24/7 Operations:** Continuous garbage collection across major areas, including Sangam Nose, Triveni, Parade Ground, Jhusi and Arail.

THE GIFT OF GIVING

Building houses and getting free electricity connections is his way of helping the poor lead more comfortable lives



Ganesh BM inaugurates Shankru and Vasanthi's new house

PRAJNA GR @ Madikeri

WHEN we exit this world, we don't take with us the assets we earned in this lifetime. So instead of concentrating on gaining more and more assets, keep what is required to lead a decent life and donate the rest to the needy," is the mantra Ganesh BM lives by. A resident of Arji panchayat in Kodagu, Ganesh is an electrical contractor and a philanthropist who has donated houses to the poor. Recently, Ganesh celebrated his 50th birthday and instead of a lavish celebration, he cut a cake with a poor family to whom he gifted a two-bedroom house. "Hard work and determination helped me earn a decent living. I was born in a poor family and lived in a straw hut for the longest time. However, I am now in a well-to-do position and have the urge to help the needy," he shared.



Hard work and determination helped me earn a decent living. I was born in a poor family and lived in a straw hut. However, I am now in a well-to-do position and have the urge to help the needy

Ganesh BM, Electrical Contractor, Philanthropist

Lighting up homes

In 2000, Ganesh won the Betoli Gram Panchayat (now known as Arji panchayat) election by five votes. "During this time, I travelled across the panchayat limits and learnt about the living conditions of the people. I was re-elected to the panchayat in 2005 and served as vice-



BEFORE



AFTER

president. I then became a Taluk Panchayat member," recalled Ganesh.

It was then that he came across a girl from a financially weak background who had scored 95 per cent in the SSLC examination. Her story went viral as she studied under an oil lamp, as the hut she lived in did not have electricity connection. "Her story inspired me and I enabled free electricity connection to her house," he recalled.

Meanwhile, in 2023, during a routine panchayat survey, Ganesh was introduced to a tribal called Kala. "No one in the panchayat limits lived in such a pitiable condition as Kala and his family. I wanted to make a difference in his life and promised to build him a house," he shared. He constructed a four-bedroom house for Kala and the keys were handed over to the family on January 22, 2024, to coincide with the inauguration of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir. "I wanted to the day to

have a special memory, so I handed over the keys on the day the Ram Mandir was inaugurated," he added.

In April 2024, Ganesh was alerted about a family which had lost their house. "I am the taluk president for the Billava Community Association, and I was told that the house of a poor woman from the community had collapsed. I decided to build her a house," he shared. He built a four-bedroom house for Kamala and her family, who had lost their shelter. He spent up to Rs 2.5 lakh each on the two houses.

After these donations, Ganesh was approached by many from financially weak families who sought his help. A total of five families from the panchayat limits reached out to him, seeking help for electricity connections to their houses. "I helped them get electricity connection free of cost," he explained.

A birthday gift

To mark his 50th birthday celebration, Ganesh built a two-bedroom house for Shankru and Vasanthi's family. "I was visiting the Therekadu paisari area for some work when I met Shankru and his family. They were living in a straw hut that was nearing collapse. I assured them I would build them a house," he said.

While the couple was living on paisari land, they received the rights for the land a few years ago. Spending Rs 1.60 lakh, Ganesh built a house on the land and handed over the keys to the house on his birthday. "A rich person looks forward to earning more assets, but we all have to leave this world behind one day. When you are alive, keep what is necessary and help those in need," concluded Ganesh.



CULTURAL SYMBOLS OF SANKRANTI



1. Ahead of Makar Sankranti, a man shops for kites, which are flown to mark the harvest season 2. A man sells ellu-bella, a traditional trail mix of sesame seeds, fried gram and jaggery, eaten during Makar Sankranti. It is distributed among friends and family to spread positivity 3. A rich harvest of vegetables right in time for the festival at Gandhi Bazaar 4, 5. An artist paints an earthen pot, and shoppers check out pots of various sizes at Pottery Town 6. A woman looks at little pots for the festival 7. People buy sugarcane stalks, which symbolise prosperity, at City Market in Bengaluru on Saturday [PICS: SHASHI HAR BYRAPPA, ALLEN EGENUSE J]

SIX BAG INFOSYS SCIENCE AWARDS FOR RESEARCH

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Infosys Science Foundation (ISF) hosted the 16th edition of Infosys Science Awards during which about six researchers, including two women, were awarded for their breakthrough research across six different categories.

Now, in its 16th year, the prize has revised its eligibility criteria to honour researchers under the age of 40 (previously 50), emphasising the significance of recognising exceptional talent at an early stage.

The winners were honoured by chief guest Professor Peter Sarnak, Gopal Prasad Profes-

sor of Mathematics at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. The winners received a gold medal, a citation, and a prize purse of USD 100,000.

Kris Gopalakrishnan, president of the Infosys Science Foundation, emphasised the significance of the prize's new direction, stating, "Recognising early-career talent is vital to foster innovation and inspire the next generation to tackle future challenges. This year's laureates showcased remarkable dedication and creativity, offering solutions to pressing global issues. To encourage meaningful research collaborations, we have introduced the Infosys Prize Residency pro-

gramme, which will have winners from outside India spend a month at Indian institutions of their choice," he said.

Professor Peter Sarnak congratulated the winners, highlighting how their groundbreaking research has significantly contributed to fields such as mathematics, physics, computer science, life sciences, economics, social sciences, and humanities. "Over the years, I have witnessed the extraordinary talent and influence of Indian mathematicians, physicists, and computer scientists. This year's prize winners continue that tradition, excelling across diverse disciplines," he noted.



(From left) Arun Chandrasekhar, Mahmood Kooria, Shyam Gollakota, NR Narayana Murthy, Peter Sarnak, S Gopalakrishnan, Siddhesh S Kamat with their awards at the 16th edition of Infosys Science Awards on Saturday | VINOD KUMAR T

Infosys Science Awardees

ECONOMICS - Arun Chandrasekhar, Professor, Department of Economics, Stanford University, was awarded for his pioneering work on social and economic networks. By leveraging innovative datasets and theoretical approaches from machine learning and computer science, he advanced development economics. Notably, his mapping of network data from multiple villages in Karnataka serves as a critical tool for addressing key questions in this field.

ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE - Shyam Gollakota, Professor, School of Computer Science and Engineering, University of Washington, received the award for his impactful research across diverse engineering domains. His contributions include smartphone-based affordable healthcare tools for low and middle income countries, innovations in battery-free computing and communication, and the use of AI to enhance human auditory sensing.

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES - Mahmood Kooria, Lecturer, School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh, was honoured for his groundbreaking studies on maritime Islam with a global perspective, particularly focusing on pre-modern and early modern Kerala. His research highlights the transformative role of Islamic law in shaping the Indian Ocean littoral.

LIFE SCIENCES - Siddhesh Kamat, Associate Professor, Department of Biology, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune, won the prize for his discoveries related to bioactive lipids, their receptors, and the associated metabolic and signalling pathways.

MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES - Neena Gupta, Professor, Theoretical Statistics and Mathematics Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, was recognised for her remarkable work on the Zariski Cancellation Problem in algebraic geometry. Her proof in 2014, involving Asanuma's 3-dimensional affine variety, provided a striking negative answer to Zariski's original problem in positive characteristic.

PHYSICAL SCIENCES - Vedika Khemani, Associate Professor, Physics Department, Stanford University, was awarded for her groundbreaking contributions to non-equilibrium quantum matter. Her most notable achievement is the discovery of time-crystals, a major theoretical and experimental breakthrough.

Glimpse into army life inspires youth, students to serve country

RAKSHITH GOWDA @Bengaluru

MORE than a thousand students and youths experienced a unique opportunity to handle rifles and guns, climb aboard combat tanks used by the Indian Army to protect the nation, and gain firsthand insights into the life of an army personnel.

A 15-year-old girl, brimming with excitement after using army rifles and sitting on a tank, shared her dream of joining the Indian Army with TNIE, during the 'Know Your Army Mela 2025'. The event, organised by the Indian Army to commemorate the 77th Army Day, took place at Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw Parade Ground on Saturday.

The event was inaugurated by Major General VT Mathew, General Officer Commanding, Karnataka and Kerala Sub Area (PVSMA, YSM), who released tricolour balloons and felicitated the Veer Naris.

Preethi, a 9th standard student from Karnataka Public School, Jahalahalli, said, "I used a rifle today, but one day, I aim to join the army and use it to protect my nation. Today, I learned so much about the army, and am grateful to the organisers for offering a glimpse into army life, which will inspire young children like me to pursue this path," she said and added, "The army is the pride of the nation, and being here today fills me with pride. Though no one in my family has served in the army, I will make it my mission to do so." Another student, Chethan, shared his as-

piration of joining the Indian Air Force, saying it has been his life-long dream.

Manimal, a visitor who attended the event with her daughter and husband, sharing her experience said, "I had only seen daredevil motorcycle displays on television, but today, I watched it live. I also enjoyed the dog show and learned a lot about grenades, fingerprint detection, and combat bridge-laying." Students and youths also participated in activities like horse rides, a dog show, and a daredevil motorcycle display. A drama presented by students of Army Public School also captivated the audience.

The event attracted both young and old, who eagerly took videos and photos with the Gorkha Rifles soldiers posed in their uniforms with weapons, shouting the slogan, "Jai Mahakali, Aayo Gorkhali."

Major Deep Chandra from the Fourth Battalion, Eighth Gorkha Rifles, explained, "The event is organised to strengthen relationship between the army and civilians. It intended to give clarity to the public on how the army works and how it protects the nation and inspires future generations."

It also featured informative and interactive stalls, providing details on recruitment opportunities and an Army placement cell. Army Day marks the transition of the Indian Army from British command to Indian leadership, commemorating the appointment of Field Marshal KM Cariappa as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army.



NCC cadets pose for a selfie atop a tank at 'Know Your Army Mela' organised as part of the 77th Army Day celebrations at Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw Parade Ground in Bengaluru on Saturday | ALLEN EGENUSE J

KSEAB announces timetables for SSLC, II PU exams

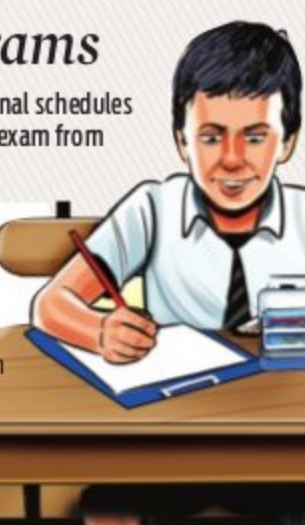
The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) has released the SSLC and II Pre-University (PU) final schedules for the academic session 2024-25. The first annual exam for II PU courses will be held from March 1 to 20, and the SSLC exam from March 21 to April 4. The SSLC exam will be conducted from 10 am to 1.15 pm, and the II PU exam from 10 am to 1 pm.

TIME TABLE FOR II PUC EXAM 1

March 1 : Kannada, Arabic
March 3 : Mathematics, Education, Logic, Business Studies
March 4 : Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Marathi, Urdu, Sanskrit, French
March 5 : Political Science, Statistics
March 7 : History, Physics

March 10 : Optional Kannada, Accountancy, Geography, Home Science
March 12 : Psychology, Chemistry, Basic Maths
March 13 : Economics
March 15 : English
March 17 : Geography

March 18 : Biology, Sociology, Electronics, Computer Science
March 19 : Hindustani Music, Information Technology, Retail, Automobile, Health, Beauty and Wellness
March 20 : Hindi



TIME TABLE FOR SSLC EXAM 1

March 21 : Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, English, English (NCERT), Sanskrit Mathematics, Sociology
March 26 : English, Kannada (second languages)
March 29 : Social Science
April 1 : Elements of Electrical Engineering - IV, Elements of Mechanical Engineering - IV, Elements of Electronics Engineering - IV, Programming in ANSI 'C', Economics
April 2 : Science, Political Science, Hindustani Music, Carnatic Music
April 4 : Third Languages - Hindi (NCERT), Hindi, Kannada, English, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit, Konkani, Tulu
NSQF Subjects : Information Technology, Retail, Automobile, Beauty and Wellness, Apparel made ups and Home Furnishings, Electronics and Hardware



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CLP meet scheduled for tomorrow; Sources say Siddaramaiah wants leader of his choice to succeed him as CM

SIDDU CAMP MAY PUSH FOR DALIT CM TO COUNTER DKS

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI
@ Bengaluru

FACTIONS within the ruling Congress have become active with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah convening the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting here on Monday.

The Siddaramaiah camp is likely to send out a message indirectly to the party high command that it is in favour of a Dalit CM.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister **HK Patil** and Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy's meeting with Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara on Saturday assumes significance in view of the Siddaramaiah camp's move.

According to sources, their discussion revolved around Monday's CLP meeting.

As per the agreement reached in 2023, Siddaramaiah, who managed to become CM for the second time, committed to pass on the baton after completing two years of his tenure. Now, with the two-year tenure nearing, Siddaramaiah wants a leader of his choice to succeed him as CM, according to highly placed sources.

The way KPCC president Shivakumar objected to Siddaramaiah's leadership made the latter take this stand, the sources said. It is with this objective the CM had reportedly suggested Dr Parameshwara to hold a meeting of SC/ST legislators to create an opinion in favour of a Dalit CM. But Shivakumar allegedly got it shelved.

CLP MEETING

AICC general secretary (in-charge of Karnataka) Randeep Singh Surjewala had instructed Dr Parameshwara not to go ahead with the meeting. Dr Parameshwara, who followed his instruction, however clarified that the meeting had not been cancelled and would be held soon.

Siddaramaiah camp members Dr Parameshwara, public works minister Satish Jarkiholi and cooperation minister KN Rajanna, among others, are likely to meet Surjewala, who will arrive here Sunday evening, and insist that a Dalit leader be made the next CM as per Siddaramaiah's advice or else the party may face the wrath of SCs and STs, the sources said. Recently, Rajanna accused the party high command of being anti-SCs and



STs for issuing a directive not to hold the meeting of legislators and leaders from these communities. Rajanna was also critical of Shivakumar's visits to temples, where the latter got his supporters to raise slogans that he is the next CM.

Rajanna had suggested that Shivakumar could aspire for CM's post after the 2028 Assembly elections. Reacting to this, Shivakumar's brother and former Bengaluru Rural MP DK Suresh said Rajanna may share his thoughts with the CM and the party high command. Rajanna, a staunch supporter of Siddaramaiah, might have made these statements to send a message to the high command, according to a Congress leader. Besides Rajanna, the Siddaramaiah camp had Dr Parameshwara, a senior Congress leader, who was KPCC president for eight years (2010-2018), as its torch-bearer against Shivakumar, the Congress leader said. Given Dr Parameshwara's seniority, Surjewala may meet him at his residence. "I have spoken to Surjewala over phone and explained the intention of the SC/ST legislators' meeting. When Surjewala arrives here, I will hold discussions with him and proceed further," Dr Parameshwara said on Saturday.



Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar participates in a religious gathering, attended by seers, in Sringeri on Saturday | EXPRESS

I'll work as per high command's dictates: DCM

SRINGERI: In the wake of recent political developments in the ruling party, DCM DK Shivakumar on Saturday said he was not looking for support from any quarter, but would rather work as per the dictates of the Congress high command. Replying to media queries here about party workers pressurising, and insisting that Shivakumar become the next CM, the latter stated that nobody should pressurise anybody on his behalf, nor does he want anyone's support. "I do not want anyone putting pressure on my behalf. I do not want anyone's support. I do not want any MLA giving his support in my favour. It is between the Congress and me, and I do what the party wants me to do," he urged. When asked about his recent temple visits, Shivakumar clarified, "I am a firm believer in Dharma. I offer prayers at home every day. I pray for the welfare of the state, well-wishers and myself. If praying is dubbed as 'temple run', then all temples must be closed." When pointed out that there have been significant twists and turns in his political career, whenever he visited Sringeri, Shivakumar said not to read too much into it, adding that people have blessed them, and that the CM and he will govern the state for five years, according to the party's instructions, ignoring what others say.

MLC CT Ravi gets threat letter, BJP state chief slams govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

BJP MLC CT Ravi has received an anonymous letter, wherein miscreants have threatened to barge into his house and assault him if he fails to "fall at the feet of the Belagavi leader and apologise to her". The letter, a copy of which was posted on a social media platform by BJP state president BY Vijayendra, warns that there is a threat to Ravi's son's life.

Hitting out at the state government for not taking any action against those who tried to assault Ravi on the Suvarana Vidhana Soudha premises, the BJP state president said the government and police are aware of the forces that are threatening Ravi, but despite that, they are not taking any action as everyone knows that they are part of the Congress.

He said there was an attempt to assault Ravi in Suvarana Vidhana Soudha, and even after that he is being constantly threatened. The threat letter sent to him is a serious concern and it cannot be ignored, he added.

He urged the state government to provide special security to Ravi. If such threats to Ravi or any BJP workers continue, the party will take it as a challenge and fight against it, Vijayendra said. Belagavi police had arrested Ravi for allegedly using a derogatory term against minister Laxmi Hebbar. Ravi had denied the charge and accused the police of harassing him. Meanwhile, Ravi has filed a complaint at the Basavanahalli police station in Chikkamagaluru, with regard to the threat letter.

This cowherd facilitated surrender of Naxals

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI
@ Bengaluru

GOWRAMMA, a tribal woman, played a key role in the surrender of six Naxals before Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Bengaluru a few days ago.

Gowamma, a cowherd, worked as a messenger between the government and Naxals. She is Annugowda's wife and hails from Kittaleguli near Kigga in Sringeri taluk.

While taking her cows for grazing in the forests, she used to bring messages from Naxals to the government and take messages back to them. Gowamma knew the hideouts of some of the surrendered Nax-

als and used to interact with them. The Naxals too trusted her and believed that she would not reveal their whereabouts. Among the Naxals, Latha Mundagaru met Gowamma frequently.

She passed the letters from the Naxal Surrender and Rehabilitation Committee to Latha. The Naxals, who went through the letters and the rehabilitation package offered, reposed faith in the government and decided to surrender, said committee member Parvatheesha Bilidale.

A letter from former Naxal

Suresh Angadi to his wife Vanajakshi Balehole, one of the surrendered Naxals, is said to have influenced them to take a decision to surrender. Angadi was severely injured in an attack by a wild elephant while trying to escape from ANF personnel in Kerala's forests some time ago.

In his letter, Suresh spoke about the diminishing support to the Naxalite movement by the present day youth, who are tech savvy. He stated that there are options to fight for justice in democracy. He also narrated how is getting medical care and how well he is

being treated by Kerala government officials and police.

SP played key role

"Superintendent of Police (Internal Security) Venkatesh Prasad, during his stint with ANF, played a key role in collecting information on Naxals and their contacts, which came in handy for negotiations for over six months," Parvatheesha said. A team, including two members from the committee and writer Bajagere Jayaprakash and Shivamogga-based advocate KP Sripala, worked effectively and succeeded in bringing the six Naxals to the mainstream through negotiations.

Yatnal questions BYV over BJP's Assembly poll debacle

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayapura

BJP MLA **Basanagouda Patil Yatnal**, who has been at loggerheads with former chief minister BS Yediyurappa and BJP state president BY Vijayendra, has questioned why a meeting called for former party MLAs by Vijayendra on Friday, failed to discuss the causes which led to BJP's defeat in the Assembly polls.

Addressing the media on Saturday, Yatnal said, "The meeting was attended by former BJP MLAs, who lost the Assembly polls. The question should have been asked, 'who is responsible for their defeat?' Why is the BJP state president talking to them now, nearly two years after the polls?"

In a sarcastic remark against Vijayendra, he said the organisers of the meeting should have admitted candidly that the MLAs lost and became 'former', because of some BJP leaders' (referring to Vijayendra) internal pact with the Congress in the polls. "If there was no internal pact, our MLAs would not have become 'former MLAs', and we would have been in government. But now, the question should have been discussed in the meeting as to who was behind their defeat?" he again asked.

He claimed that Vijayendra and his team had now called a meeting of former MLAs only because of the pressure exerted by him (Yatnal) and his team. "The media should now say that the former MLAs got some respect from the state president, because of Yatnal and his team," he mentioned.



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah greets Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar upon his arrival in Bengaluru, as Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot looks on, on Saturday

WARM WELCOME

EXPRESS READ

Threat to SC/ST MLAs: Panel seeks action against BYV

BENGALURU: The National Commission for Scheduled Castes has taken up the issue of BJP MLA Ramesh Jarkiholi alleging that party state president BY Vijayendra had threatened SC/ST MLAs into backing him. Based on a reported statement of Ramesh in the media on December 3, last year, the director of the commission, G Jagannath, wrote to the principal secretary of the social welfare department on December 6, seeking action. The commission has taken suo motu action, following which Principal Secretary P Manivannan discussed with minister Dr HC Mahadevappa.

GTD to skip crucial JDS Naxal encounter, surrenders lack transparency: Annamalai meet to elect state chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Mysuru

JDS Core Committee chairman and Chamundeshwari MLA GT Devegowda has maintained that he would not participate in the JDS meeting to be held to pick a new state president.

He cited some important engagement and development works in his constituency for his inability to attend the meeting.

Speaking to the media here on Saturday, Devegowda said, "Due to unavoidable circumstances, I could not attend the DISHA meeting chaired by the JDS state president and Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel HD Kumaraswamy. I am not upset with the party leaders."

The senior leader, however, defended his son GT Harish Gowda battling for his friend Nikhil Kumaraswamy as state unit chief.

Asked about his daughter getting a site under 50:50 scheme of the MUDA, the MLA said RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna is after elected representatives and officials.

"My daughter and son-in-law purchased the sites from those who have sites under the 50:50 scheme and the Lokayukta probe will throw light on the issue. All those who have the sites under 50:50 scheme have the right to sell it. There is a need to investigate and act on those writing anonymous letters posing a threat to society," he said.

TAMIL Nadu BJP president K Annamalai on Saturday expressed serious doubts over the transparency and integrity of the encounter of Naxal Vikram Gowda, followed by the surrender of six other Naxals, recently.

Speaking to reporters in Mangaluru, Annamalai, who previously served as the Superintendent of Police in Chikkamagaluru district -- where the six surrendered Naxals were active -- raised suspicions about the potential influence of overground Naxal supporters on the government during the surrender process.

He stressed that when individuals who have been in conflict with the government de-



Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai at an event in Mangaluru on Saturday | X

'Rahul may look at how his family treated Constitution'

ENS @ Udupi

TAMIL Nadu BJP president K Annamalai on Saturday stated that senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi may ponder over "how his grandmother and father treated the Indian Constitution", rather than carrying a red book (Indian Constitution) in his hand.

Speaking at a book release function here, Annamalai said "the Congress utilised Dr BR

Ambedkar for only vote-bank politics and insulted him. The Grand Old Party amended the Constitution only to save itself and to remain in power, but BJP brought amendments to the Constitution for the nation's good, and they were not against the will of Dr Ambedkar". Annamalai accused the Opposition of exploiting Dr Ambedkar solely for electoral gains, while disrespecting him. "We have been witnessing the

administration of PM Modi, who always functions as per the Constitution. A leader of a political party always brings a small red book in his hand, whenever there is a debate on the Constitution. He does not know how many pages that book contains, or no idea how many Articles it has. He also does not know how many times his family amended that Constitution," Annamalai said, slamming Rahul Gandhi.

What's cooking? A lot on Cong's plate



INNER meetings are creating ripples in Congress. They've exposed fissures within the ruling party in Karnataka, requiring its central leadership's intervention to contain the damage.

As the internal power struggle became apparent, threatening to damage Congress and its government's image, the central leadership stepped in. A meeting of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes ministers and legislators called by Home Minister G Parameshwara was put off on the directions of AICC general secretary in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala.

However, that did not bode well with a section of senior leaders, who publicly expressed their displeasure. Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna, a staunch supporter of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, even questioned if the high command was "anti-SC/STs".

Many in the party believe that Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar pulled the strings in the national capital to put the brakes on dinner politics in Karnataka. On the day Surjewala issued the directions to Parameshwara to put off the meeting, the DyCM was in New Delhi. Just a day before that Shivakumar had launched Congress' "Pyari Didi" scheme — promising Rs 2,500/month for women if it comes to power — ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls. He also talked about the Karnataka government's Guarantee schemes to lend credence to the party's claims in the national capital, where it is fighting a tough battle against AAP and BJP. While Congress may be on a weak wicket in New Delhi, the central leadership inviting the DyCM to launch the scheme showed his heft within the party.

The trouble within the party started after Siddaramaiah and a few ministers and legislators attended a dinner meeting hosted by PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi at his residence in the first week of the new year, when Shivakumar was travelling abroad with his family. Such meetings and the party leaders' remarks about 'one-leader-one-post' or the need for creating more DyCM posts indicate underlying tensions within the party that often come to the fore.

Differences in the Congress could give fresh ammo to the BJP and JDS to strengthen their narrative against the state government. BJP says the administration has taken a hit due to the internal squabbles in Congress. Also, the NDA partners are trying to overcome their internal challenges to take on the ruling

party in the forthcoming local bodies elections.

Now, all eyes are on the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting called by Siddaramaiah and the party leaders' meetings to be held under the leadership of Surjewala in Bengaluru on Monday.

Ironically, many senior leaders, including some ministers, were not aware of the agenda of the CLP meeting. Generally, legislative party meetings are held just ahead of, or during the session, and to discuss major developments. Many feel Monday's CLP is an effort to send out a message of unity in the party. Parameshwara maintained that since the Budget session is nearing, there is a possibility of discussing the caste census report implementation and development works in assembly segments.

The CLP could be an open house for MLAs to air their grievances, and many issues, including dinner politics, are likely to come up for discussion.

As leaders try to cement their positions or seek elevation, it appears to be an arduous task for the high command to maintain complete cohesion. Another major challenge it faces is a power-sharing agreement between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar that the party is said to have worked out when the government was formed in 2023. However, there is no clarity on such an agreement.

Some senior leaders who are strongly committed to the party ideology believe that there is a need for a core committee, consisting of senior ministers and party leaders, to deal with the challenges at hand, and keep the party and its government on the right track.

Such an initiative would help build consensus and enable quick decisions on important issues, including local bodies elections and appointments to all boards and corporations. Many also are of the view that making such appointments in one go within two to three months of coming to power would have been much better for the party. After two-and-a-half years, the party could have accommodated another set of leaders in those positions to instil a sense of involvement among the party workers and leaders.

Senior leaders feel that the focus should be on building consensus and collective decisions must be made on key issues so that the government delivers on its promises.

For now, the Congress may be confident of overcoming immediate challenges, given its numbers in the Assembly. But if it has to look beyond this term, the party needs to take everyone along. Perhaps, some clarity on that may emerge post the CLP meeting on Monday evening. It is not clear if that will be followed by another dinner!

After 15 yrs, ex-court staffer gets 5-yr jail term

Now aged 69, accused booked by Lokayukta police in disproportionate assets case in 2009

YATHIRAJU @Bengaluru

FIFTEEN years after being booked for possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income, a former employee of the Metropolitan Magistrate Traffic Court (MMTC) was sentenced, at the age of 69, to five years of simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 7.79 lakh by a special court.

Accused M R Rangaswamy retired as second division assistant attached to the MMTC. He was booked based on a complaint filed by the registrar of the City Civil Court with the Lokayukta police in April 2009 for allegedly possessing disproportionate assets (DA) during

the check period from June 1982 to April 2009.

Judge Nandeesh R P of the Special Court for the trial of cases under the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act passed the order sentencing Rangaswamy for the offences punishable under Sections 13(1) (e) read with Section 13(2) of the PC Act, as he was found in possession of DA of Rs 7.78 lakh for which he could not satisfactorily account. The DA was 98.14 per cent to his known source of income in the check period.

He was accused of acquiring DA by abusing his official position.

"The offence committed by the accused has an effect on society as he was a court employee," the court observed.

The counsel of the accused argued that Rangaswamy, 69 years old and retired, has suffered due to the delay in the conclusion of the trial for nearly 15 years, during which he regularly attended the court, and pleaded for a lenient view.

Countering this, the public prosecutor argued that the accused committed a heinous crime, which affected society, and the regular appearance of the accused during the trial and his conduct before the

court are not grounds to show leniency in the punishment.

The court said the accused was found to have purchased properties and sites. It is unfathomable how the accused, being a second division assistant, could purchase sites and properties and that too without intimating the expense to his higher authorities as required under the applicable rule.

The explanation offered by the accused on how he acquired the large properties is neither plausible nor satisfactory. Therefore, it is clear that the prosecution has established the criminal misconduct of the accused beyond reasonable doubt, the court observed.



STILL A HOT ISSUE

Members of progressive organisations stage a protest against Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his recent statement on Dr BR Ambedkar, in Mysuru on Saturday | UDAYSHANKAR S

Man working on behalf of mom at BBMP office arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A day after Upa Lokayukta Justice B Veerappa found a man working on his mother's behalf at the BBMP office, the Siddapura police arrested him on Saturday. However, the woman Palike employee and the officer in-charge are yet to be traced and arrested.

The accused has been identified as Naveen (35), his mother Kavitha, a second division assistant, and Sujatha, assistant revenue officer of the Kempegowdanagara Sub-Division office in Jayanagar.

The police said Naveen was arrested for cheating the public. He had access to the login credentials and password of the e-Khata system and was caught by Lokayukta officials while attempting to change an e-Khata address at the BBMP office. Based on a complaint filed by Lokayukta officials, Naveen and others were booked under various sections of the BNS.

The police added that Naveen was remanded by a court to five days of police custody.

Mother of two dies by suicide after paramour hangs self

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A 23-year-old mother of two ended her life at her residence in Rachenahalli in Sampigehalli police station limits on Saturday, following the suicide of her alleged paramour on Friday. The deceased, identified as Dilshad of Vijayapura, had married Krishna, an autorickshaw driver, six years ago after falling in love with him. The couple had two children.

According to reports, Dilshad's paramour, Johnson, a 26-year-old construction worker, died by suicide at his rented house in Thanisandra on Friday evening after realising he could not marry Dilshad. Distraught over her paramour's death, Dilshad took her life on Saturday morning. It is said that the duo got to know each other through social media. The police, however, have not yet confirmed the connection between the two deaths.

The Hennur police confirmed that Johnson ended his life by hanging at his residence on Friday evening. Police added that he was in love with the woman and had been depressed over the impossibility of marrying her. An unnatural death report has been registered in Johnson's case, the police said.

Meanwhile, the Sampigehalli police said Dilshad was found dead at her home around 11 am. Based on a complaint filed by Dilshad's mother, Begam, an unnatural death case was registered.

HELPLINE

If you are having suicidal thoughts, or are worried about a friend, or in need of emotional support, someone is always there to listen. Call Sneha Foundation - 04424640050, Tele Manas - 14416 (available 24x7) or Call, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences' helpline - 02225521111, which is available Monday to Saturday from 8 am to 10 pm.

NCPCR to states: Hold child labour rescue campaigns till March 31

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has directed state governments to launch rescue and rehabilitation campaigns aimed at eradicating child labour nationwide. The initiative began on January 10, and will continue until March 31.

The NCPCR said the pan-India Rescue and Rehabilitation Campaign 2.0 will target the rescue of children and adolescents working in labour-intensive sectors across districts. This includes establishments such as factories, dhabas, hotels, and shops, as well as both organised and unorganised sectors, such as mines, brick kilns, and construction sites.

Additionally, the rehabilitation of children will be carried out in accordance with the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, and The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

The NCPCR notification stated, "The designated Nodal Officer of the District Task Forces, under the leadership of District Magistrates, must exercise all or any of the powers and carry out all or any of the duties outlined in Section 17C of the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Rules, 1988, throughout the Rescue and Rehabilitation Campaign."

The NCPCR notification has received a mixed response from child rights activists. Nagasimha G Rao of the Child Rights Trust emphasised, "Involving the education department in this initiative is vital, as out-of-school children are more prone to becoming child labourers. The Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the child labour crisis, pushing many children into work due to economic challenges. It is encouraging to see that public empathy for the plight of child labourers has grown during this period. People must call 1098 to report instances of child labour."

Renni D'Souza, President of the Child Welfare Committee, Dakshina Kannada District, said, "A key strength of this campaign is its inclusion of adolescents. Many adolescents work as labourers in Dakshina Kannada, but there is no reliable data on their numbers. It is crucial to engage all stakeholders to ensure the proper rehabilitation of child labourers rescued during the campaign," he said.



830 commercial buildings sealed for tax default

From January 1 to 10, the BBMP sealed 830 non-residential (commercial) buildings that had the highest property tax arrears. Revenue department special commissioner Munish Moudgil stressed that in all revision cases, recovery is made by sale of the sealed, confiscated or foreclosed properties. "Steps are being taken to seal all non-residential buildings with the highest arrears and collect the outstanding amount," he added. On January 10, 182 non-residential buildings were sealed. Of the eight zones, East and West topped with over 200 buildings sealed. Revenue officials have been asked to ensure that notices are sent to defaulters and their properties sealed. ENS

Man booked for cheating posing as forest min's aide

The Vidhana Soudha police have registered a case against an individual who had allegedly posed as a close associate of the forest minister and cheated a man of Rs 6 lakh by promising to provide government jobs. The accused has been identified as Veeresh K P, a resident of Rajajinagar. The police said complainant P H Adavi, a resident of Ranebennur, became acquainted with Veeresh in 2023. Claiming to be a close associate of the forest minister, Veeresh allegedly demanded advance payments to secure jobs and collected Rs 6 lakh in installments. However, Veeresh failed to secure the jobs and did not return the amount, the police said. ENS

WESTERN RAILWAY
MATERIAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
CORRIGENDUM TO E-AUCTION SALE PROGRAMME
RESCHEDULE AND ADDITIONAL SALE PROGRAM DURING
JAN 2025 FOR P.WAY AND OTHER VARIOUS SCRAP
E-Auction Sale Notification No. S.III / Auction Programme-1 / JAN-2025 Dated-09/12/2024
The following Reschedule of auction date and Additional E-auction program for disposal of P. Way Scrap Material to be held in JAN 2025 for following depots is as given below:

Depot	Reschedule		Additional E-Auction program Of Jan 2025	Divisional Officer in charge	Contact No.
	From	To			
MAHALAXMI	27.01.2025	31.01.2025	20.01.2025	Deputy Chief Materials Manager- Mahalakmi	022- 24929571 09004495750
PARDI	27.01.2025	31.01.2025	20.01.2025		

All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged. Please visit Western Railway Website of material Management Department i.e. www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in as well as www.irops.gov.in e-auction portal for further information.
(No. S.III/Auction Programme-2/JAN 2025 /Dt. 09.01.2025)
Like us on: [Facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly) | Follow us on: [X.com/WesternRly](https://www.x.com/WesternRly) 0960

JM FINANCIAL
Asset Reconstruction Company Limited
Corporate Identity Number : U67190MH2007PLC74287
Registered Office: 7th Floor, Cnergy, Appasaheb Marathe Marg, Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400025
Website - www.jmfinancialarc.com
Contact Person: 1. Raghavendra Gowda - 9686463502 2. Vishal Ketele - 9584966653 3. Prashant Monde - 022 - 6224 1676
E-Auction Sale Notice - Fresh Sale
That Piramal Capital and Housing Finance Ltd have assigned a pool of Loan (including below mentioned Loans) together with underlying security interest created thereon along with all the rights, title and interest thereon under Section 5 (1) (b) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("SARFAESI ACT") vide an assignment agreement dated March 29, 2023 ("the Assignment Agreement") in favour of JMFAEC (JM) (herein referred as Assignee) acting in its capacity as trustee of JMFAEC - Aranya - Trust. It is to notify that PCHFL is authorized and appointed to act as Service provider / Collection agent to facilitate all operational and procedures processes vide Assignment / Service Agreement.
Pursuant to taking possession of the secured asset mentioned hereunder by the Authorized Officer of Secured Creditor under the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 for the recovery of amount due from borrower(s), offers are invited by the undersigned for purchase of immovable property, as described hereunder, which is in the possession, on "As is Where is Basis", "As is What is Basis" and "Whatever is There is Basis", Particulars of which are given below:

Loan Code/Branch/ Borrower (s) / Co-Borrower (s) / Guarantor (s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Property Address_Final	Reserve Price	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (10% of RP)	Outstanding Amount (08-01-2025)
Loan Code No.: 24800001340, Bengaluru - Jayanagar (Branch), Naveenkumar R (Borrower), Ganga Devi (Co Borrower 1)	Dt: 16-06-2021, Rs. 1259708/-, Rs. Twelve lakh Fifty Nine Thousand Eight Only)	All The piece and Parcel of the Property having an extent - Site No 11, sy No 1177, 5 Nest Pearl Yeshwantpura Village, Kasaba Hobli Malur Taluk Kolar Karnataka IN 563130 Boundaries As :- North - Site no.10 South - Site no.12East - C A Site West- Road	Rs. 1521000/-, Rs. Fifteen lakh Twenty One Thousand Only)	Rs. 152100/-, Rs. One lakh Fifty Two Thousand One Hundred Only)	Rs. 2039992/-, Rs. Twenty lakh Thirty Nine Thousand One Hundred Ninety Two Only)

DATE OF E-AUCTION: 20-02-2025, FROM 11.00 A.M. TO 1.00 P.M. (WITH UNLIMITED EXTENSION OF 5 MINUTES EACH), LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF BID: 19-02-2025, BEFORE 4.00 P.M.
For detailed terms and conditions of the Sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.jmfinancialarc.com/Home/Assetsforsale> OR <https://www.bankauctions.in>
STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT TO THE BORROWER/GUARANTOR / MORTGAGOR
The above mentioned Borrower/Guarantor are hereby notified to pay the sum as mentioned in section 13(2) notice in full with accrued interest till date before the date of auction, failing which property will be auctioned/sold and balance dues if any will be recovered with interest and cost from borrower/guarantor.
Date: 12.01.2025 | Place: Bengaluru Sd/- (Authorized Officer), (Aranya - Trust)

Indian Overseas Bank
REGIONAL OFFICE - SALEM : 7/54, Ideal Garden Complex (2nd Floor) Five Roads, Salem, Tamil Nadu - 636 004. Phone : 0427-2448440, 2448690, 2448540
MEGA E-AUCTION SALE ON 29-01-2025 FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 6(2) & Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s), Guarantors (s) and Mortgagor (s) that the below described immovable/ movable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Indian Overseas Bank will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", and "WHATEVER THERE IS" condition on 29.01.2025 between 11.00 AM and 3.00 PM through website : <https://baanknet.com/auaction-psb/bidder-registration> and (<https://baanknet.com/>) towards recovery of Bank's secured debts together with cost, charges and future interest thereon and details of the e-Auction are furnished below.
The interested bidders can participate in the E-Auction after remitting 10% of the Reserve Price mentioned against the respective auction property as Earnest Money Deposit (EMD).
THIMMAPURAM BRANCH : 5/196, Salem Main Road, Gandhi Nagar, Thimmapuram PO, Kaveripattinam Taluk, Thimmapuram-635112.
1) M/s. Sri Krishna Match Industries, Represented by its Prop. Mr. P. Krishnan, S.No.617/B1, Door No.3/362, Mittahalli Village, M. Sowlar, Mittahalli Panchayath, Opp. Dhorathi Amman Temple, Kaveripattinam, Krishnagiri Dist., PIN- 635112. **2) Mr.P.Krishnan,** S/o. Mr. N. Perumal, No.48/3, 2nd Cross, Ejipura, Bangalore South, Bangalore, Karnataka 560047
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY : 20.00 Cents or 8712 Sq.Ft., of land with building there on (3993.99 Sq.ft) situated at Sy.No.617/B1, Mittahalli Village, M. Sowlar, Mittahalli Panchayath, Opp. Dhorathi Amman Temple, Kaveripattinam, Krishnagiri Dist standing in the name of Mr.P.Krishnan within the following boundaries: East: Land Well of Perumal; West: Remaining land of Perumal and; North: Remaining Land of Perumal and South: Palacode Main Road.

Amount Outstanding : Rs.18,57,150/- (as on 05.01.2025)	Reserve Price Rs.38,66,100/-	EMD Rs.3,86,610/-	BID Multiplier Rs.50,000/-	Contact : Mrs.Vani Mob : 8925950968
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Auction / bidding will initially be for a period of 10 (Ten) Minutes with auto extension time of 10 (Ten) minutes each till the sale is concluded. During the e-auction, bidders will be allowed to offer higher bid in inter-se bidding over and above the last bid quoted and the minimum increase in the bid amount must be of Rs.50,000/- to the last higher bid of the bidders. "The H-1 bidder should close the Auction/Bid with at least one bid, i.e., Increment over and above the Reserve Price amount as mentioned in the sale notice. For known and unknown encumbrances, if any, it is the responsibility of the bidders to enquire on their own and Bank will not bear any responsibility in this regard. In the property value quoted under the Reserve Price is exclusive of the 1% TDS amount. Wherever, the H-1 bid amount is more than Rs.50.00 lakhs, the H-1 bidder/ purchaser should bear the 1% TDS on the H-1 bid amount and pay the 1% TDS into the PAN account of the owner/s of the auction property. Bank dues have priority over any other dues with reference to the property auctioned herein mentioned. For the terms and conditions, please visit our web portal <https://baanknet.com/auaction-psb/bidder-registration>, details of which are available on the e-Auction portal. Platform (<https://baanknet.com/>) for e-auction will be provided by service provider M/s. PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd., having Registered office at Unit 1, 3rd Floor, VIOS Commercial Tower, Near Wadala Truck Terminal, Wadala East, Mumbai - 400037 (contact Phone Number 8291220220 operation time of Help desk: 8:00 am to 8:00 pm). The Interested Bidders /Purchasers are required to participate in the e-auction process at e-auction Service Provider's website <https://baanknet.com/>
PLACE : Thimmapuram DATE : 06-01-2025 **Authorised Officer**

बैंक ऑफ महाराष्ट्र Bank of Maharashtra
Zonal Office, Bengaluru : No. 465/A, 22nd Cross, 3 rd Block, Opp. NMKRV College for Women, Jayanagar, Bengaluru - 560011
TELE : 080 - 46561220 | e-mail : cmrmarc_ban@mahabank.co.in
Head Office : Lokmangal, 1501, Shivajinagar, Pune-5
Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Properties (Appendix IV-A)
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrowers & Guarantors that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to Bank of Maharashtra, the possession of which have been taken by the Authorized Officer of Bank of Maharashtra, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 28.01.2025, for recovery of the balance due to the Bank of Maharashtra from the Borrower(s) as mentioned in the table. Details of Borrowers & Guarantors, amount due, Short description of the immovable property and encumbrances known thereon, possession type, reserve price and the earnest money deposit are also given as under -

Sr. No.	Name and address of Borrowers & Guarantors	Outstanding dues as on 08.01.2025	Short description of immovable property		Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit
			Possession Type	Encumbrances known to the bank	
1.	Borrower : Mr. ARVSS Srinivasa Rao Mrs. Sridevi Araja Both residing at House No.2, 2nd Floor, Survey No.93/6, Near Garden City Super Market, Shirdi Sai Nagar, Kothnur Narayanpura, Bengaluru - 560 077.	Rs. 43,67,525.00 (Rupees Forty Three Lakh Sixty Seven Thousand Five Hundred and Twenty Five Only) plus further interest w.e.f. 09.01.2025 plus all costs, penalty, charges and expenses Or other incidental charges thereof.	All that piece and parcel of 3BHK residential property (land & building) bearing Flat No.411 measuring built-up area 1354 sq. ft. on 4th Floor in the project named "DS Max Sanskruthi" with one car parking with undivided share of the land of 319 sq. ft. in the total area of the land lying and situated K Narayanpura, K R Puram Hobli, off Thanisandra Road, Bengaluru East Taluka and the flat is butted and bounded as follows - on towards North : By Lobby, Open Space & Lift; on towards South : By open Space & Flat No.410; on towards East : By Lobby & Flat No.408 & on towards West : By Open Space.	Rs. 44.40 Lakh 10% of reserve price	
2.	Asset Recovery Branch (M-8292940000) Borrower : Mrs. Florance Aron W/o S Harry Aron Both residing at No.604, SMR Vinay Regency, Next to ASR Convention Hall, Banaswadi, Bengaluru - 560 043	Rs. 62,06,850.13 (Rupees Sixty Two Lakhs Six thousand Eight Hundred Fifty and Thirteen paise) plus further interest w.e.f. 09.1.2025 plus all costs, penalty, charges and expenses Or other incidental charges thereof.	All that piece and parcel of 2 BHK Residential property (land & building) bearing Flat No.407, 4th Floor in the project named "DS Max Solitaire" with super built-up area 1020 sq. ft. consisting of Living room, Dining Hall, Kitchen, two bed rooms, one common bathroom and one attached bathroom with one car parking at built with undivided share of the land measuring 298 sq. ft. lying and situated at Banzar Layout, Horamavu, Near Agara Lake, K R Puram Hobli, Bengaluru-560 043 and the Flat is butted and bounded as follows-On or towards North : By Flat No.408, On or towards South : By Flat No.406, On or towards East : By Lobby & Lift, On or towards West : By Open Space.	Rs. 41.02 Lakh 10% of reserve price	
3.	Asset Recovery Branch (M-8292940000) Borrower : Mr. S Hary Aron Babu & Mrs. G Komala Both residing at Door No.513, 1st Floor, 24th Main Road, Maranahalli, J P Nagar, Phase-II, Bangalore-560078	Rs.70,73,134.00 (Rupees Seventy Lakhs Seventy Three Thousand One hundred Thirty Four Only) plus further interest w.e.f. 09.01.2025 plus all costs, penalty, charges and expenses or other incidental charges thereof.	All the piece and parcel of 2BHK residential apartment bearing Flat No.GF.02 (on BBMP Khatha No 1447/GF-002/747/6-10-23-24) on ground Floor measuring built-up area 1100.00 sq. ft. in the Apartment named 'SRI SAI KAMAL NIVAS' constructed on the land bearing Survey No.58/5A and Site Nos.9, 10, 23 & 24 measuring area 5190 sq. ft. with undivided share of the land measuring area 471 sq. ft. along with one covered car parking lying and situated at Village-Gubballu, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore-560 061 and the Flat is butted and bounded as follows-On or towards North : By Private Property & Open to Sky, On or towards South : By Flat No.308, On or towards East : By Corridor & Flat No.310, On or towards West : By Private Property & Open to Sky.	Rs. 38.22 Lakh 10% of reserve price	
4.	Asset Recovery Branch (M-8292940000) Borrower/s : Mr. Somashekar N & Mrs. Vidhyarani M Both residing at No. 164, 2nd Cross, Sri Ramanagar, Banashankari, 3rd Stage Banaglore - 560085.	Rs. 60,72,000.00 (Rupees Sixty Lakhs Seventy Two Thousand Only) plus further interest w.e.f. 09.01.2025 plus all costs, penalty, charges and expenses or other incidental charges thereof.	All the piece and parcel of 2BHK residential apartment bearing Flat No.309 in B Block on 3rd Floor measuring built-up area 1197.32 sq. ft. in the Apartment named "PRUTHIROYAL" constructed on the land bearing Survey No.43 measuring area 1 Acre 14 Guntas (4 Guntas Kharab) with undivided share of the land measuring area 308.58 sq. ft. along with one covered car parking lying and situated at Village-Gottipene, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore-560 078 and the Flat is butted and bounded as follows-On or towards North : By Private Property & Open to Sky, On or towards South : By Flat No.308, On or towards East : By Corridor & Flat No.310, On or towards West : By Private Property & Open to Sky.	Rs. 21.85 Lakh 10% of reserve price	
5.	Asset Recovery Branch (M-8292940000) Borrowers: Mr. K Manjunath E-865, balaji nagar, near Hebbagudi, Biocon Factory Hosur Main Road, Bengaluru 560099 Co Borrower: Mrs. Mala N Sy no 44/44, Behind Biocon Factory, Hebbagudi Village, Balaji Nagar, Electronic City Bengaluru 560099. Mr. Krishnappa M E-865, balaji nagar, near Hebbagudi, Biocon Factory, Hosur, Main Road, Bengaluru 560099.	Rs. 2,38,09,680.00 (Rupees Two Crore Thirty Eight Lakhs Nine thousand Six Hundred Eighty Only) plus further interest w.e.f. 09.01.2025 plus all costs, penalty, charges and expenses or other incidental charges thereof.	All the Piece and parcel of land along with building constructed at 44/4A of Hebbagudi Village, Balaji Nagar, behind Biocon factory, Electronic city Post, Bangalore 560100 and bounded as follows: North: Road East: Land of Munniyappa West: Land of Munishami South: Land of Krishnappa	Rs. 206.50 Lakh 10% of reserve price	
6.	Asset Recovery Branch (M-8292940000) Borrower/s : Mr. Vishal Srinivasan S/o. V. Shridhar, No.8, 1st Floor, 6th Main, Victoria Layout, Bangalore-560047 Guarantor : Mr. Deepak Samasi S/o. David Samasi, No.14/9, 3rd Main Road, St. Thomas Town Post, Kammanahalli, Bangalore-560 047	Rs.79,55,480.00 (Rupees Seventy Nine Lakhs Fifty Five Thousand Four Hundred and Eighty Only) plus further interest w.e.f. 09.01.2025 plus all costs, penalty, charges and expenses or other incidental charges thereof.	All the Piece and parcel of 2BHK residential Flat bearing No.2C on 2nd Floor measuring area 1133 sq. ft. in the building known as "Y S Apartment" along with one car parking along with 400 sq. ft. undivided share of land right, title and interest in property constructed on the land bearing Nos.4, 5, 6, 3 and 3A formed in Sy No.6/2 lying and situated at Guddatta Layout, Hosakerehalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru-560 085.	Rs. 26.09 Lakh 10% of reserve price	

Physical **NIL** **Physical** **NIL**

Date of E-Auction & Time: 28.01.2025 between 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm.
Property Inspection Date & Time: 22.01.2025 to 27.01.2025 with prior appointment.
Last Date & Time for submission of Bid/EMD: 28.01.2025 upto 1.00 pm.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in website of Bank of Maharashtra i.e. "<https://www.bankofmaharashtra.in/propertiesfor-sale/>" & "<https://baanknet.com/auaction-psb/login/>".
STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT, 2002
The borrower/s and guarantor/s above named are hereby notified to pay the sum as mentioned above along with up to dated interest and ancillary expenses before the date of auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/sold and balance dues if any will be recovered with interest and cost.
Date : 09.01.2025 | Place : Bangalore Sd/- Authorized Officer, Bank of Maharashtra, Bangalore Zone

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No point being satisfied with nuts and bolts, aim must be 100% indigenisation: VP

Dhankar encourages BEL to lead semiconductor revolution; handheld startups in the field



Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, his wife Sudesh Dhankar and Karnataka Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot light a lamp during Bharat Electronics Limited R&D Award ceremony in Bengaluru on Saturday

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

ATMANIRBHAR Bharat will only come when the world sees us as a crucible of research and development, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar said. Dhankhar, who was speaking at the Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) R&D Award Ceremony on Saturday, called for practical research that drives real-world change, urging researchers to stay away from work with momentary importance that ends up gathering dust on shelves.

"Research must be authentic, cutting-edge, and practical. It should correlate with the change you seek to bring about. Superficial research has no value," he said, pointing to India's underwhelming contribution to global patents.

Dhankhar, who was speaking among Governor Thaaawarchand and Gehlot and BEL CMD Manoj Jain, encouraged BEL to lead the semiconductor revolution, from design to manufacturing, while also hand-holding startups in the field. "This is the need of the hour. Establish India's position in global supply chains through friend-shor-

ing. Identify startups that require hand-holding and nurture them," he emphasised.

On indigenization, the Vice-President said the focus must extend beyond components to engines and core materials. "There's no point being satisfied with nuts and bolts. Our aim must be 100-per cent indigenisation that others recognise and seek from us," he said.

Highlighting the significance of fostering innovation early, Dhankhar called for igniting the spirit of research in schools and colleges. "Our young boys and girls are often unaware of the enlarged basket of opportunities. The National Education Policy has brought a positive shift towards skill orientation, but the spirit to innovate and engage in research must be inflamed in schools and colleges," he said.

The VP also underscored the need for greater participation in impactful research to position India as an economic powerhouse. "We are one-sixth of humanity, but our presence in global research remains minuscule. Those in managerial and governance roles must take the initiative to change this," he stated.

'Trend of appointment driven by patronage, favouritism a concern'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

TAKING a potshot at various states for its approach of holding on to some of the officials favouring them by giving an extension of service in government, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday said, "Extensions in service, extensions in any form for a particular post are a setback to those who are in line. Extension indicates that some individuals are indispensable. Indispensability is a myth. Talent abounds in this country. No one is indispensable. And therefore, it lies in the domain of public service commissions at the state and the central level that when they have a role in such kinds of situations, they must be firm."

Delivering the inaugural address at the 25th National Conference of Chairpersons of All-State Public Service Commission at Bengaluru on Saturday, the VP expressed concern over 'the visible' trend of appointment driven by patronage, and favouritism.

"We must account ourselves to our conscience. We cannot have a public service commission Chairman or a member, wedded to a particular ideology or an individual. That will be undoing the essence and spirit of the framework of the constitution," he said.

He also stated that post-retirement recruitment is a problem. In some states, it has been structured. Employees never retire, particularly those in the premium services. They get several ad-hoc nomenclatures. This is not good. Everyone in the country must have due and that due is defined by law. Any largesse of this kind is antithetical to what was visualised by the framers of the Constitution.

As an honest candidate and aspirant, have time and again been subjected to re-exams due to paper leaks and scams in recruitment. Expressing his concern, Dhankhar said, "This is a menace. You have to curb. Your fairness of selection will have no meaning if paper leakages are there," he said. Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, who was also present on the occasion, said Public Service Commissions are pillars of democracy, upholding meritocracy and fairness, and contributing immensely to governance. He said tackling challenges such as paper leaks remains a top priority for Karnataka. Karnataka Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot, Chairman of UPSC Preeti Sudan, and Chairman of Karnataka Public Service Commission Shivashankarappa S Sahukar were present on the occasion.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

UNION Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, expressed confidence on Saturday that India is in a strong position regarding energy security, emphasising the country's ability to purchase petroleum products at competitive prices from around the world without being dictated by any single supplier.

Speaking at the Mangaluru Lit Fest on 'Energy for Survival - Security and Climate Debate', Puri highlighted India's efforts to diversify its energy sources. The number of oil suppliers has expanded from 27 to 39 in recent years, ensuring a more stable and varied supply. He reassured that there is no need to worry about oil availability in the international market, noting that the Western Hemisphere and non-OPEC nations are increasing their crude oil exports.

Puri also emphasised that affordability is a more significant concern than availability. India is the only country where energy prices have decreased over the past three years, thanks to reductions in excise duty and VAT cuts by BJP-ruled states, he said.

SpaDeX Mission satellites within 230m for docking

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Saturday corrected the drift anomaly between the two Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) satellites by closing the distance between them to 230 metres.

This puts the two satellites, SDX01 (the chaser) and SDX02 (the target) on the way to the much-awaited docking, although ISRO did not specify when that would happen.

ISRO took to 'X' on Saturday evening, stating, "Arrested at Inter Satellite Distance (ISD) of 230 m, all sensors of SDX01 and SDX02 are being evaluated. Spacecraft's health is normal."

Successful docking — where in one spacecraft attaches to the other to facilitate transfer of astronauts, supplies and equipment — is crucial for future space missions, especially with ISRO planning India's own space station by 2035 and future manned lunar missions by 2040.

The docking between SDX01 and SDX02 was initially scheduled to take place on January 7.

The distribution of cheques to the families of the victims of the Tirupati Stampede incident will commence on January 12. The TTD Chairman formed two committees to personally visit and distribute the ex-gratia cheques of Rs. 25 lakh each to the six families

GROWING ENERGY NEEDS

International gas prices set to reduce post 2026-27: Puri



Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri at Mangaluru Lit Fest on Saturday

Looking in to the future, Puri predicted a drop in international gas prices post 2026-27, driven by cheaper imports and the global green transition. He expressed confidence in India meeting its target of 20% bio-fuel usage by 2025, while also excelling in the production of Compressed Biogas (CBG), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), and Green Hydrogen.

"The green hydrogen revolution will succeed in India because it thrives on local demand, production, and consumption," Puri noted. "While we can export green

ammonia, the local demand and production of green hydrogen are key to its success. Every electrolyzer manufacturer worldwide is now present in India, and with the implementation of pumped storage, the green hydrogen sector is poised for growth." He further emphasised that the target of 5 million metric tons of green hydrogen by 2030 might be an underestimation, as the sector is developing rapidly with key projects like the recent tender floated by IOCL.

Puri also discussed India's growing energy needs, stating that the country's daily crude oil refining capacity has increased from 5 million barrels to 5.4 million barrels. At the current rate, he forecasted a rise to 6-7 million barrels per day in the near future. Additionally, he projected that over the next 20 years, India would account for 25% of global energy demand growth due to the plateauing or slowing energy consumption in other major economies.

"Despite global geopolitical challenges, India's energy consumption continues to rise, and it is set to increase even further," Puri added.

Dalit boy beaten to death, two arrested

ENS @ Kalaburagi/Bidar

POLICE have held two people from Rakshal village of Aurad taluk in connection with the murder of a Dalit youth, said Bidar SP Pradeep Gunte. Speaking with *TNIE* here on Saturday, Pradeep Gunte said that Rahul and Kishan Rao have been arrested under different sections of Bharatiya Nyay Samhita (BNS) in connection with the incident. Briefing about the incident, Bidar SP said that Dalit youth Sumit (19) was allegedly beaten to death for falling in love with a girl from the Gavli community of Rakshal village in Bidar district.

The victim, Sumith was a B.Sc student from Bedakunda village in Kamalanagar taluk of Bidar. According to the victim's father Vijaykumar, Sumith was allegedly assaulted by the girl's brother Rahul and the father of the girl Kishanrao at their Rakshiyal (K) village on January 5. Later, Rahul contacted Sumith's father and told him that Sumith was assaulted for being with his sister when she was alone at home.

Vijaykumar rushed to Rakshiyal (K) village, along with his friend Veerashetty Hugar. They found Sumith who was injured and battling for life. They took Sumith to Bedakunda village from where he was taken in a car to hospitals in Udgir, and then to Latur in Maharashtra.

Latur police informed their counterparts in Kushnoor police station in Bidar district about the incident. Kushnoor police recorded Vijaykumar's statement in the hospital in Latur on January 6.

Later, Sumith stopped responding to the treatment and succumbed to injuries on January 8. An autopsy was done in Bidar Institute of Medical Sciences, Bidar.



However, while making the manoeuvre to reach 225 metres from the then distance of 500 metres between satellites, the drift was found to be "more than expected, post non-visibility period. The planned docking was then postponed.

ISRO then scheduled the docking some time on January 9, but found the inter-spacecraft distance to be 1.5 km and put them on a hold mode. The space agency on Saturday then brought the two spacecraft to a distance of 230 metres of each other and put them on hold.

The SpaDeX mission, undertaken at the cost of Rs 375 crore, was launched by ISRO's PSLV-C-60 rocket on December 30 night from Sriharikota.

revenue earning railway lines of the state, now under other zones, with ECoR have reportedly been overlooked.

What has left many perplexed is that the foundation stones have been laid for SCoR zonal headquarters and Rayagada divisional headquarters even before their respective boundaries are finalised.

Even as the DPR is pending for approval and a formal notification on commencement of the new zone is awaited since 2019, the matter was expedited this year only after the general elections.

'Many live in pukka houses inside forests'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ACCORDING to forest department officials and experts, while tribal relocation was a success in Bandipur Tiger Reserve, it is a major problem in NTR. In December, 2024, Khandre announced tribal relocation from Bheemgad and MM Hills, but no one is talking of relocation struggles in Biligiri Ranganabetta (BRT) Tiger Reserve, Kudremukh Wildlife

Railway panel recommends to retain truncated Waltair division

HEMANT KUMAR ROUT
@ Bhubaneswar

AMID the political uproar over creation of South Coast Railway (SCoR) zone, carving it out of East Coast Railway (ECoR) and South Central Railway (SCR), a committee constituted by the Railway Board has recommended not to close down the contentious Waltair division.

As proposed in the detailed project report (DPR) of SCoR zone, Waltair division, now under ECoR was to be split into two parts with one merging with Vijayawada division and

Sanctuary, Kali Tiger Reserve and NTR's Virajpet division.

Retired PCCF, BJ Hosmat, citing the example of NTR, Anechowkur range, said tribals are expanding their area. They have now lands inside and outside forests. It is also shocking to see them staying in pukka houses inside forests.

"Unlike BRT, there is no tribal livelihood for tribals in NTR or Kali. In NTR, we see vehicles coming to pick tribals to work

in coffee estates at 8 am and drop them back after 6 pm, while they continue to stay inside forests. They refuse to come out saying they are used to forest lives and want their children to experience the same, too. But there are no livelihood opportunities inside. Instead, they demand facilities and the government has ordered it to be provided. FRA is not a land grant or land distribution act," said an official.

the other converting into a new division headquartered at Rayagada.

While the SCoR zone was proposed to have three divisions - Vijayawada, Guntur and Guntakal spreading across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, ECoR zone is also to have three divisions - Khurda Road, Sambalpur and Rayagada, confined to Odisha, after the bifurcation.

The SAG committee constituted to review the DPR and look into the public demands of both Odisha and Andhra Pradesh has, however, recom-

mended to retain the truncated Waltair division after splitting it into two parts with some administrative adaptations. The recommendations are awaiting the nod of the central cabinet.

According to the committee recommendations (accessed by *TNIE*), around 565 km will fall within the jurisdiction of the truncated Waltair division and the rest 541 km will come under Rayagada division after the bifurcation. The Waltair division comprises around 1,106 route km.

The committee may have recommended against the closure of Waltair and advised an opti-



Proposed HQ of SCoR

mum staff strength of 105 gazetted and 780 non-gazetted officers for the new zone, but the demands of Odisha for inclusion of Kothavalasa-Kirandul Line and merger of major

Govt schools establish communication with other countries through ham radio



For the pilot study, 300 candidates from 20 schools were trained in 2024; Radio stations were set up on January 6

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

STUDENTS of government schools under the Social Welfare Department are now establishing contact and holding conversations with people from other states and countries through ham radio.

For the first time, Indian Institute of Ham Radio Stations and Social Welfare Department (SWD) have set up ham radio stations in 20 residential schools and have trained 100 students and teachers.

"There are over 800 residential schools in the state run by SWD. For the pilot study, we trained 300 candidates from 20

schools in 2024. The entire project of identifying and setting up ham radio stations started in 2023. The trained students and teachers then wrote the exams organised by Ministry of Communication, to get licence to set up the station. A total of 100 candidates cleared the exam, of which 37 are teachers. On January 6, we completed the exercise of setting up radio stations in these 20 schools. They are now establishing communication with other ham radio users," said S Sathyapal, Vice-Chairman and Director, Indian Institute of Hams.

The aim of the project is to create awareness about ham ra-

dio and help students get global exposure in the field of science, engineering, art and culture, and communication. Here, the students not just talk to ham radio users nationally and internationally, but also redesign and create their own radios and even work on new frequencies. From each school, one boy and one girl have been selected, from Classes 8-12.

Sathyapal said that at present, radio stations have been set up and each one has a particular ID and frequency for communication. They have started with basic first-level communication, which includes sharing operation link, checking signal

strength, audio quality and sharing technical report. Gradually, many tasks will be given to them, including competitions like number of stations that contact was established with or number of people spoken to.

According to statistics, Bengaluru is an amateur ham radio hub with 2,000 active users. Karnataka has a total of 3,000 amateur ham radio users.

"Ham radio communication is gradually picking up, not just in Bengaluru, but globally, and this is an interesting form of communication. We want students to get exposure and even develop this as a hobby," said an SWD official.

Actor Honey Rose to sue activist Rahul Easwar

Kochi: Following the arrest of businessman Bobby Chemmanur, actor Honey Rose on Saturday said that she will be initiating legal action against activist Rahul Easwar. She held Rahul accountable for the severe mental distress she and her family are currently enduring. In a Facebook post, Honey stated that Rahul is making attempts to downplay the seriousness of her complaint and trying to turn public opinion against her.



I am only eternity when I dance. Silence is my response, movement my answer

Minalini Sarabhai

FIVE PROBLEMS TO RESOLVE IN BUDGET 2025

NOTHING crystallises public attention like a data point. This week, India was informed that GDP growth in 2024-25 slid to 6.4 percent. Public investment is lower, industrial growth poorer and consumption is slower. There is much lather on ways to prop consumption—for instance, with a cut in income tax rates. Gaming growth numbers may deliver an illusion. Sustainability calls for fixing problems—and growth will follow. Here are a few ideas, in no particular order.

National grid for perishables: A major factor hurting demand is food inflation—hovering at 7+ percent for over a year, particularly in perishables. India needs a national grid for perishables, akin to what Verghese Kurien created for milk. Induction of a national grid will catalyse higher yields, improve farmer incomes, spur employment and curb post-harvest wastage that's estimated at 25 percent.

The grid will bridge forward and backward linkages. For starters, the government could use the one district, one product database and use the Amul and Mother Dairy procurement models.



THE THIRD EYE

SHANKKAR AIYAR

Author of *The Gated Republic*, *Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12 Digit Revolution*, and *Accidental India* (shankkar.aiyar@gmail.com)

Storage will follow procurement as cooperatives and private players enter production contracts. For sure, the template will need policy tweaks for contracts, enhanced credit via Kisan credit cards and funding of cold chains at panchayats.

Udyam credit card: Access to formal credit has persistently haunted micro entrepreneurs. A Crisil report reveals that formal credit penetration in the sector is at a mere 20 percent, while a parliament committee found that formal credit touched only 39 percent of the smaller enterprises. Micro entrepreneurs struggle to get credit and end up paying usurious rates to private lenders, as has recently been flagged by the RBI. While banks have been directed to lend to Udyam-registered entrepreneurs under priority sector norms, access is stalled or denied.

How about an Udyam credit card for micro enterprises? There is an opportunity to replicate the 1998 idea of Kisan credit cards. Access can be based on Udyam registration and the credit limits can be calibrated on business size and digital trail of UPI transactions. Norms can be set for upgrades and delinquency, and for eventual migration to platforms hosting the Unified Lending Interface.

Monetise 'solar' highways: India's growth is fuelled largely by government spending on infrastructure. To fuel growth, it imports a bulk of its energy needs. The template faces challenges. The infrastructure, however, presents an opportunity.

India has nearly 150,000 km of national highways; high solar-radiation states account for around 70,000 km. The norms state four-lane highways must be divided by a median with a width of roughly five metres (2.5 metres in hilly areas). The median has clear headroom, zero habitation threats, allows for rapid setting up of customised, high-mast solar panels with automation and innovation on angling.

The road transport ministry could direct the National Highways Authority to map the potential, initiate pilot projects by National Thermal Power Corporation and offer the ready-to-plug-and-play spaces for bids from public and private investors. As the idea expands, it will trigger economies of scale in pricing of equipment and energy per kilowatt-hour. The solar highways will present an option for green data centres, automobile charging stations, fund new highways and even trim toll rates.

Amrit Kaal fund: The ambition of a Viksit Bharat calls for a quantum rise in funding. The SBI chairman estimates India would need ₹1,094 lakh crore for 8+ percent growth by 2036. This calls for leveraging public sector assets. The idea is challenged by concerns over concentration of wealth and power. It is also haunted by partisan politics. A viable avenue is to step away from the construct of privatisation to shared public ownership. The idea is to park all PSU holdings of the government into an Amrit Kaal fund, a sovereign entity akin to GIC of Singapore.

India's public sector enterprises have improved earnings and the market value of public sector stocks has nearly trebled in recent years. The embedded value offers an opportunity to trim deficit, retire debt and upgrade sovereign ratings. To avert political pushback, the government can first transfer PSU holdings in excess of 51 percent. The fund can be leveraged to raise resources, deployed as a vehicle for disinvestment and can be listed as an exchange-traded fund to investors. The money raised can be used to trim deficit and retire debt.

Atmanirbhar senior citizens: India is home to over 150 million senior citizens, many of whom lack pension benefits. The total is expected to touch 350 million by 2050. Seniors are savers, investors and consumers. To propel the trifecta and growth, India needs retooling of the tax policies for seniors.

Senior citizens aspire to an active life and are often self-employed to scaffold their sense of identity and engagement with society. It would be useful to review the 18 percent GST they pay on consultancy incomes; given their frugal living, there is no potential to offset GST. Why not trim GST on the income of seniors—at least with a cap? Seniors also choose to live independently, often at serviced homes. Could there be an exemption on the purchase of residential property by seniors?

The Trump brand of uncertainty has economic and political implications. India can leverage its domestic economy to weather global storms if—it's a big IF—it fixes persistent problems.

WHY IS DELHI IMPORTANT FOR MODI?



POWER & POLITICS

PRABHU CHAWLA

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LEGEND says the modern city of Delhi is built on seven older ones. Though the nuances of ideological substrata are more than seven, Delhi has one face—power. From the Pandavas to the Chauhans to the Mughals to the British, it has always been a seat of power. Delhi is the heart and soul of India. The battle for ballots between the beleaguered Arvind Kejriwal and the pugnacious Narendra Modi is to capture that soul.

The city is once again witnessing the metaphorical drumbeats of war—posters, processions, poll panoply and propaganda—to dominate the 70-member assembly, turning the capital into a warzone. The opposing champions are the aggressively acerbic Modi and the astutely adroit Kejriwal; in between is a headless state Congress happy with taking potshots.

But Delhi is in the ICU. For the past few years, disregard, despair and decrepitude have haunted its roads, sewage systems, hospitals, parks and playgrounds. The Yamuna is now an artery of fatal filth. Women fear leaving home alone after dark because crime is rising. The city's 30-odd million residents breathe in poison for more than three months a year. Though it has a good airport, innumerable flyovers and decent public education, everyone would flee Delhi if they could.

The toxicity has infected the electoral verbiage of national and local leaders, who spew inventive expletives to tar

their opponents with the brush of regressive rhetoric. The combat is not between two parties, but between two individuals: the BJP, lacking a local leader to take on Kejriwal, has fallen back on its tallest leader Modi.

Why has BJP made the Delhi election a do-or-die project? After all, it's a tiny state. Kejriwal was just one of 30-odd chief ministers. Delhi's population, with a state GDP of about \$130 billion, hardly impacts national politics.

But Modi and his commanders have decided to capture Delhi at any cost. They have given tickets to almost all new defectors as well as its top MPs. In the absence of a CM face, the party has plastered the walls with Modi's visage.

The BJP obviously wishes to have a double-engine sarkar in Delhi too. Though the Centre, through the lieutenant-governor, has stripped the AAP government of all significant powers, the BJP is sparing no effort to grind it to the dust. All that Chief Minister Atishi has is an official car and an office that is mostly run under the direct or indirect supervision of the LG. Then what's the problem? It's that while the BJP rules Raisina Hills, it has been out of the Civil Lines secretariat for 26 years.

In addition, Kejriwal, who has been a thorn in Modi's side since 2014, is a problem. His high-profile presence is poor political optics for the BJP. He is a formidable potential challenger for the throne of India in the long run, because that throne is also in Delhi.

But in terms of nationwide acceptability and credibility, Kejriwal isn't even a minor threat to Modi. Even after more than a decade as PM, Modi's personal ratings exceed 60 percent, as

against Kejriwal's lower double-digits. Modi has repeatedly established that in the national elections, Kejriwal can't win even a single seat in Delhi. In the elections of 2014, 2019 and 2024, the saffron side swept all of the state's seven seats. However, in the local elections, Kejriwal forced the BJP eat crow despite a massive Modi-led campaign—the AAP polled more than 50 percent in the last two assembly elections.

Kejriwal's burgeoning capacity to damage the BJP using the Delhi model bothers the saffron brigade. It is no coincidence that both he and Modi stepped into the national arena at the same time. Kejriwal shot into prominence through Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement in 2012. Modi became the BJP's prime ministerial face in 2013. While Modi was still crisscrossing the country, Kejriwal floated his party and won 28 of the 70 MLA seats in 2013. He formed a short-lived government, allying with the Congress.

In the Lok Sabha elections, AAP didn't stand a chance against the Modi cyclone. But Modi cyclone, within a year, in 2015, Kejriwal humiliated the BJP. Since then, Kejriwal has been positioning himself not just as an unbeatable chief minister but also a national player. He expanded his footprint in other states including Gujarat. AAP created history by capturing Punjab, winning 92 of the 117 seats. Within 12 years, it has become one of the five parties that enjoy national status.

Since AAP has displaced the Congress in many states, regional parties prefer to deal with Kejriwal rather than the Congress and Rahul Gandhi. For the Delhi elections now, Mamata Banerjee, Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray

and Akhilesh Yadav have extended their support to Kejriwal, who is playing the victim by leveraging his incarceration in the excise scam.

Kejriwal has skillfully used the media to stay on prime time. Delhi is a major media centre where national news agencies, newspapers, TV channels, and online media operate from. Hence Kejriwal's daily experiments are closely watched, critiqued and disseminated. The BJP couldn't digest this flair for publicity. Moreover, Kejriwal has never accepted Modi's leadership and has made him a personal target of venomous verbs. He has rarely invited Modi, like other CMs do, for state functions. The BJP sees these as attempts to undermine the office of the prime minister.

None of Delhi's previous CMs ever got into a direct confrontation with the PM. In 1967, Vijay Kumar Malhotra, Delhi's first chief executive councillor with no independent powers, worked closely with the LG to convert Delhi into a city of fountains. Even the Yamuna was partially cleaned. Subsequent BJP chief ministers worked harmoniously with Congress governments at the Centre. Sheila Dixit, a three-term chief minister, never had even a minor tiff with Atal Bihari Vajpayee because the CM accepted the PM's supremacy and *vice versa*.

If Modi is neither a Vajpayee nor a Narasimha Rao, Kejriwal is also no Dixit or Madan Lal Khurana. Neither is willing to cede political space. The BJP is hoping that Kejriwal's acceptability has declined due to his much-publicised ostentatious lifestyle. They hope his alleged corruption in excise policy and hyperbolic attacks on Modi will disenchant voters.

The Rajdhani can't have two samrats. Modi's challenge is to avoid a third consecutive assembly defeat after three Lok Sabha victories. In the capital, where the cold wave is a common visitor, will the Modi wave triumph over the Kejriwal breakwater is Delhi's dilemma this winter.



PTI

PLANNING OUR LIVES BEYOND WORK



OPINION

ANURADHA GOYAL

Author and founder of *IndiTalks*
Follow her on X @anuradha_goyal

STEPPING into the new calendar year means surfing through a barrage of forwarded new year greetings. Answering the ones personally addressed with a hint of originality, I was transported to childhood days when we used to write new year greetings on postcards to every family we knew. Then came the era of greeting cards that were sent with a personal note mentioning the names of all family members of both the sender and the receiver. Those with cameras would send a recent picture. This was a yearly contact with all the people who were a part of our lives, personally or professionally. Greetings were an acknowledgement, an opportunity to reconnect and update.

Switch to the digital era, we swim in the sea of forwarded messages from anyone whose phone has my number saved, many numbers we cannot even recall. In times of outsourcing, we just wait for a greeting that can be forwarded on our WhatsApp broadcast list. To a couple of kids who did wish me in person, I asked, "How are you going to

make this new year happy, for yourself and for me?" They were at a complete loss and made a polite exit. It was an out-of-syllabus question. Isn't custom to simply reply Happy New Year with Happy New Year?

New Year, like all other festivals, has become a fertile ground for marketing and revenue generation. We the people have allowed ourselves to be reduced to mere consumers. We play in the hands of those who want us to buy pleasure at every step. They want us to pay for each game played and for every dance step that the loud music enables. They want us to buy things to boost our confidence, to gain acceptance from society even if it comes at the cost of perpetually being in debt or to even step into the new year.

So, instead of looking at problems and their potential solutions, let me share my new year's wish. I want us to consciously engage in more play and pleasure in our lives. Our generation glorified hard work and earning money so much that we seem to have forgotten why we are earning money in the first place. Best education is believed to be the one that can help you get the highest salary, but no one teaches us where and how to spend it, or how to sit back and enjoy it. Digital influencers have taken this chasing-the-money psychology to another level.

When we look at the avenues where money is being spent, it rarely looks like coming from the innate desire of the spender. Rather, it is primarily driven by those who want a slice of our money. For example, I see so many luxury cars in our parking lot that remain parked most of the time duly with a

fancy cover on them. Many of them are making their owners work hard to pay for their monthly loan instalments. It makes me wonder if people are working for the idea of owning a big luxury car rather than an innate desire to enjoy the luxury of driving it, or exploring the world in the lap of luxury.

Working long hours has become so much a part of our DNA that we need periodic reminders to take breaks, to enjoy all that we have already earned and acquired. Let this new year be that



New year, like all other festivals, has become a fertile ground for marketing and revenue generation. Digital influencers have taken this chasing-the-money psychology to another level. The personal connection of handwritten cards has been replaced by forwarded memes

reminder that you would enjoy every festival, every special day, and some time every day.

The Indian thought system talks about four fundamental pursuits of life—dharma, artha, kama and moksha. It gives play and pleasure a weightage equivalent to the pursuits of duty, wealth and liberation. Play and pleasure are as important as doing all that you are expected to do in your various roles in life. Enjoying rasa in life is as

QUOTE CORNER

The West Wing staff is a mix of new and veterans—many are young, all are prepared to work punishing hours. To my core, I believe in teamwork. Anyone who cannot be counted on to be collaborative, and focused on our shared goals, isn't working in the West Wing.

Susie Wiles, the incoming White House chief of staff nicknamed 'Ice Maiden' for her stern, no-nonsense attitude



Uncertainty over the incoming Trump administration's trade policies is actually expressed globally through higher long-term interest rates.

Kristalina Georgieva, IMF managing director, at a press briefing

I'm just in shock right now. I've been doing this a long time, over 45 years. This is the first time I've ever won anything as an actor.

Demetri Moore, after winning a Golden Globe as the best actress in a musical or comedy for her role in *The Substance*, a story about a fading actress

MAILBAG WRITE TO

letters@newindianexpress.com

Public interest

Ref: *Formula E fiasco lays aside public interest* (Jan 11). It is true that if prudential norms are thrown to the wind, institutions lose reputation. As things stand, politicians treat government as a kind of personal fiefdom—irrespective of which party is ruling. But politicians escape and civil servants face the music when the government changes, as seen in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. People's representatives are there for protecting public interests, but the personal takes over.

Jayaprakash Reddy, Nalgonda

Criminals ruling

Ref: *Don gets felony sentence without any punishment* (Jan 11). Felony is a crime more serious than a misdemeanour, and can attract imprisonment of more than a year in the US, or even the death sentence, depending on the severity of the crime. Donald Trump got sentenced for felony but escaped punishment, and got unconditional discharge. This is the US, the self-appointed superpower of the world, for you. India ignores such kinds of crimes, as our politicians are always involved in more serious ones and they rarely get sentenced. So the sufferer in both the countries are the people, as politicians with criminal records get to rule over them.

Govardhana Myneedu, Vijayawada

Goa grumble

Ref: *Neither going nor gone, Goa evokes a groan* (Jan 11). Goa's transformation from a tranquil retreat to a bustling tourist hub raises concerns about its identity. While economic growth is welcome, it's crucial to preserve the state's cultural essence and natural beauty. Sustainable development, not unchecked commercialisation, should be the guiding principle.

Heraa Aslam, email

Meagre allocation

Ref: *Madurai-Thoothukudi railway line shelved as per TN's wish: minister* (Jan 11). Controversy has erupted over the railway minister's remarks that the

line has been shelved as the Tamil Nadu government did not want it. This has come as a surprise to the Tamil Nadu government as the chief minister has been frequently demanding adequate funds to speed up the project. It was reported that in 2024-25 an interim budget of Rs 100 crore was allocated for it, which was reduced to Rs 18.72 crore in the subsequent full budget. The meagre allotment needs clarification. Why is Tamil Nadu given step-motherly treatment in fund allotments?

D Sethuraman, Chennai

Work-life balance

The call for working 90 hours a week is absurd, as it works out to 12.5 hours a day. Add the commuting time to and from work, and this may exceed 15 hours daily, leaving only 9 hours for other pursuits. This is unreasonable. It is also to be noted that labour laws limit working week to 45 hours and to 8 hours daily. It is increasingly felt all across the world that workers must have more free time to spend with their families for more productive work.

V Padmanabhan, Bengaluru

Food labels

It's strange that the palm oil packets distributed through ration shops in Chennai do not have manufacturing dates, batch numbers, expiry dates and prices. This is totally in contravention of the Consumer Protection Act 2019. When an ordinary trader indulges in malpractices, the government swings into action. What's the remedy when a government department itself breaks the law?

P G Menon, Chennai

Pant's role

Ravichandran Ashwin praised Rishabh Pant for his tight defensive skills in Test cricket, despite Pant playing high-risk shots like the reverse sweep against fast bowlers. However, he advised the keeper-batter to understand his role in the team more clearly. The spin legend opined that the flamboyant batter could score a century in every Test if he were to control his extravagance and impetuosity. It's time for Pant to realise his potential and perform according to the situation, keeping in mind the value of his wicket.

S Sankaranarayanan, email

Bonding over food: PM's day-out with 3K youths at Bharat Mandapam

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi is set to engage with 3,000 dynamic young leaders from across the country during the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue 2025, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Sunday. This event aligns with the PM's Independence Day call to involve 1 lakh youth in politics without political affiliations.

Modi will discuss various topics with them over lunch and address the gathering on the occasion. "I will spend the entire day with my young friends at the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue 2025. Over conversation and lunch, we will discuss various subjects aimed at building a Viksit Bharat," he said in a post on Saturday.

According to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, the dialogue aims to break the 25-year-old tradition of hosting the National Youth Festival in a conventional format. "It aligns with the PM's Independence Day call to involve 1 lakh youth in politics without political affiliations and provide them with a national platform to transform their ideas for a Viksit Bharat into reality. Additionally, the PM will also participate in multiple activities designed to inspire, motivate, and empower the nation's future leaders," it stated.



The young leaders will make 10 PowerPoint presentations covering 10 key thematic areas crucial to India's development before the Prime Minister. "These presentations reflect the creative ideas and solutions proposed by young leaders to tackle some of India's most pressing challenges," the PMO added.

As part of the programme, the Modi will also release a compilation of the best essays, submitted by participants on the 10 themes, which encompasses diverse sectors such as technology, sustainability, women's empowerment, manufacturing, and agriculture. During the Dialogue, which commenced on Saturday, the young leaders will participate in competitions, activities, and thematic as well as cultural presentations.

India joins UN expert panel on Big Data monitoring SDGs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

INDIA has joined the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics, a key body focused on leveraging big data to monitor and report on the Sustainable Development Goals.

This follows India's recent membership in the United Nations Statistical Council.

India's active involvement in the Committee of Experts will help shape global standards in data science for official statistics, and highlight its pioneering initiatives like the Data Innovation Lab and exploration of alternate data sources such as satellite imagery and machine learning in policy making.

The opportunity to contribute at this global forum positions India as a major player in this area. Membership in the Committee of Experts is a strategic opportunity for India to align its domestic advancements in big data and data science with international goals, showcasing the country's capability to lead transformative initiatives in the data domain.

"India's inclusion in the Com-

How India helps

India's active involvement in the Committee of Experts will help shape global standards in data science for official statistics, and highlight its pioneering initiatives like the Data Innovation Lab and exploration of alternate data sources such as satellite imagery and machine learning in policy making.

mittee of Experts represents a significant leap forward for the country's statistical ecosystem.

As part of the committee, India will contribute to shaping global standards and practices in harnessing big data and data science for official statistical purposes," an official release said.

The opportunity to contribute at this global forum positions India as major player in this area. "Membership in the Committee of Experts is a strategic opportunity for India to align its domestic advancements in big data and data science with international goals,

Shah bats for NDPS courts in states for speedy trials

Dark web, cryptocurrency emerging challenges in fight against drugs

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday that dark web, cryptocurrency, on-line marketplace and drones are the emerging challenges to the fight against drug trafficking, and these have to be checked by strict measures.

Chairing a regional conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security' at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, Shah called upon state governments to coordinate with high courts to ensure that more special NDPS (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) courts are established for faster trials in narco-terror cases. He called for "an uncompromising fight" against narcotics to safeguard the future generations.

Shah highlighted the importance of a "whole-of-government" approach and coordination between the Centre and states in combating the growing threat of drug addiction and trafficking, emphasizing that India will not allow even a single kilogram of drugs to be smuggled in or out of the country. Lauding the role of Central and state agencies in eliminating drug networks in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat and UP, the home minister said



terrorism linked with them must also be crushed.

"The use of dark web, cryptocurrency, online marketplace and drones continue to be a challenge for us even today. The Centre and its agencies are working out means to counter such threats. But technological solution to these problems must be found through joint efforts by the states, Central government and technocrats for the country's security and development," Shah said.

Reiterating the government's zero-tolerance policy towards drugs, Shah announced that during the drug disposal fort-

night from January 11 to 25, over 44,792 kilograms of seized narcotics worth ₹2,411 crore will be destroyed. He said 24 lakh kilograms of drugs, valued at over ₹56,000 crore, have been seized since 2014.

Shah urged states to utilise technology like geo-tagging, videography, and real-time data-sharing through platforms, such as the National Narcotics Helpline 'MANAS' portal, to enhance coordination and effectiveness in anti-drug operations.

He also called for increased use of the NIDAAN database to track and tackle trafficking.

Former CM's son, ex-AAP minister on BJP second list of 29 for Delhi polls

ANUP VERMA @ New Delhi

THE BJP on Saturday released its second list of 29 candidates for the February 5 Delhi Assembly polls. While Kapil Mishra, a former AAP leader, has been named from Karawal Nagar, Harish Khurana, son of former Delhi CM Madan Lal Khurana, has been fielded from the Moti Nagar constituency. The list included five women, including two from reserved seats.

BJP leader Karnail Singh has been pitted against AAP's former minister Satyendar Jain from Shakur Basti. The party has fielded Raj Karan Khatri from Narela, Surya Prakash Khatri from Timarpur, Gajendra Daral from Mundka, Bajrang Shukla from Kirari, Karan Singh Karma from Sultanpur Majra, and Tilak Ram Gupta from Trinagar.

Priyanka Gautam, who had recently joined BJP from AAP, has been fielded from Kondli (SC) assembly seat.

Besides, the party has also given ticket to Manoj Kumar Jindal from Sadar Bazar, Satish Jain from Chandni Chowk, Deep-

ti Indora from Matia Mahal, Urmila Kailash Gangwal from Madipur, Shyam Sharma from Hari Nagar, Shweta Saini from Tilak Nagar.

To finalise candidates for the remaining 41 of the 70 seats, the Central Election Committee (CEC) of the BJP had met on Friday evening.

The CEC had reportedly stressed the selection of non-controversial candidates, and giving equal consideration to women belonging to OBCs and other sections.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and BJP president JP Nadda were part of the CEC that went through the recommendations of the Delhi BJP Core Committee, which had met earlier in the day.

On January 4, the saffron party issued the first list of 29 candidates, which included Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma from the New Delhi constituency against AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, and ex-MP Ramesh Bidhuri from Kalkaji against CM Atishi.

With the second list, the BJP has so far named candidates for 58 seats.

THE BOY WHO DREAMT OF STARS

M ABDUL RABI

IN the tranquil village of Mela Kattuvilai nestled in the heart of Kanniyakumari district, the rustling coconut leaves once bore witness to the dreams of a boy who dared to reach for the stars. From humble beginnings, V Narayanan has risen to become the ISRO chairman — a testament to his resilience, sacrifice, and unyielding determination. His journey is one of soaring ambition, grounded by an unwavering connection to his roots.

Born on May 14, 1964 to C Vanniya Perumal, a coconut merchant, and S Thangammal, Narayanan was the eldest of six siblings. Growing up in a modest household, he was no stranger to hardship. As a child, he often assisted his father in the coconut business at Nagercoil's Vadasery market, embodying the values of hard work and responsibility from an early age.

Narayanan's education began in Tamil medium at the government primary school in Keezha Kattuvilai, where he studied until Class 5. He then joined LMS Higher Secondary School in Zionpuram, walking several kilometres daily to complete his schooling till Class 10. After earning a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from Government Polytechnic College at Konam in 1982, he set out on a path that would lead him to remarkable heights in science and technology.

Life threw a challenging choice his way. In 1982, both Narayanan and his younger brother V Gopala Krishnan secured admission to pursue Bachelor of Engineering. Their father could support only one. Narayanan sacrificed his dream of studying at Anna University in Guindy and worked at TI Cycles, MRF Tyres and BHEL, ensuring that his brother completes education, while quietly nurturing his own aspirations.

Narayanan's career at ISRO began in 1984 at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram. For four-and-a-half years, he worked in the Solid Propulsion area, contributing to Sounding Rockets, Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicles, and Polar Satellite Launch Vehicles. He then pursued an MTech in Cryogenic Engineering at IIT Kharagpur, where he graduated with first-class honours. Upon returning to ISRO, he joined the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre, where he became a trailblazer in cryogenic propulsion.

His groundbreaking contributions include the development of the Cryogenic Upper Stage for the GSLV Mk-II vehi-



MANDAR PARDIKAR

cle and the C25 Cryogenic Propulsion System for the GSLV Mk-III launch vehicle. As Project Director of the C25 Cryogenic Project, Narayanan provided visionary leadership, enabling the system's development in record time. His work cemented India's position as one of six nations with the capability to develop complex cryogenic propulsion systems, a milestone that underpinned the success of missions like Chandrayaan-3.

His doctoral research and MTech thesis directly contributed to the development of Indian cryogenic propulsion systems. Over the years, he has received numerous accolades, including gold medals for his exceptional work and recognition as a prolific researcher with numerous technical papers to his name.

Despite his achievements, Narayanan's humility and compassion remain unchanged. His uncle, C Chellathurai, fondly recalls his nephew's affectionate nature and commitment to family.

"Narayanan would visit the village for temple functions and during times of grief, offering comfort to those in need," he said. Chellathurai also shared how his nephew inspired young people in the village, emphasising the importance of education.

Narayanan's connection to his roots extended beyond his family, as he often visited his alma mater and community.

S Sivathanu, the headmaster of Narayanan's primary school, recalls the scientist's visit during a Pongal celebration, where he interacted with students, handed out gifts, and showcased Chandrayaan-3's success on a giant screen. "He was simple and approachable," Sivathanu said. Narayanan encouraged students to embrace their dreams.

A former colleague, who shared a room with Narayanan during their early days at VSSC, described him as hardworking, disciplined, and focused. "He was kind but expected others to work diligently," he added.

Narayanan's journey is not just one of individual triumph but also a testament to the power of selflessness.

A serious mind behind an exuberant persona

BHAIRU CHANDRA PATEL
WRITER, COLUMNIST

BIM BISSELL, who died last Thursday, was an institution in Delhi. It seemed as if the whole town knew this warm and exuberant person who, despite poor health towards the end, was all over the place. She would not miss a book event of a friend, a dance performance or a painting exhibition of a struggling artist. She held musical soirees at her elegant home where she also laid the best table in town. At Christmas there would turkey as well as desi street food.

Behind the exuberance and joy for life, however, there lurked a serious mind. She was a philanthropist who preferred to do charity work quietly, without fuss and publicity. She was a connoisseur of art and an ex-

pert on crafts and handlooms. She took pride in dressing elegantly. She loved matching everything, from her accessories to her chappals.

Her full name was Bimla but everyone called her Bim. She was one of the founders of Fabindia, a company that now has more than three hundred lifestyle shops in India and abroad. I met her soon after I arrived in the city in 1986 to take up a UN posting. At that time, she was employed with the World Bank and we had offices in the same building in Lodi Estate. Hers was on one floor above mine. Meeting her was a lucky break for me. She took me under her wings, introduced me to every one worth knowing in the city, became my mentor as well as a friend for life.

Bim died at the age 93 and is survived by her two children, William and Monsoon. Her husband, John Bissell passed away in 1998. On September 24, 1963, New York Times announced their wedding accompanied by a picture of young Bim in a splendid saree. The ceremony took place in the New Delhi home of Chester Bowles, the US Ambassador to India.



It was a marriage made in heaven. Three years earlier, John had launched Fabindia, a company that had modest beginnings as an exporter of Indian home furnishings. John was from Hartford in United States and his love for India began as a child, hearing stories from his father of his time here during the Second World War.

After college John worked for Macy's, the department store in New York, when he was offered a two-year grant by Ford Foundation to teach Indian craftspeople how to make goods for export. Once he arrived, he made India his home.

Bim and John were an attractive couple and the toast of Delhi. It was a marriage made in

heaven. She also knew a thing or two about furnishings and fabrics having been an advisor to the Cottage Industries Emporium on Delhi's Janpath.

Together they set up Fabindia that made wearing well-tailored traditional Indian clothes like kurtas and chudidars look cool. In later years the company expanded into other home products made by artisans in small towns and villages, though textiles continued to be the continue to be the company's main focus.

Fabindia opened its first retail shop in Greater Kailash in 1976. Today, there are over 300 of them spread across India as well as abroad with a turnover of over ₹1600 crore.

The company's team continues to provide most of the designs and colors to village artisans who, in turn, have learnt the basics of quality, consistency and finish. It plays an essential part in rural employment. Currently there are over forty thousand people across the country who make products for Fabindia. A percentage of the company's shares are held by the people who make their products.

508km Mumbai-Ahmedabad railway corridor to have 100% green buildings

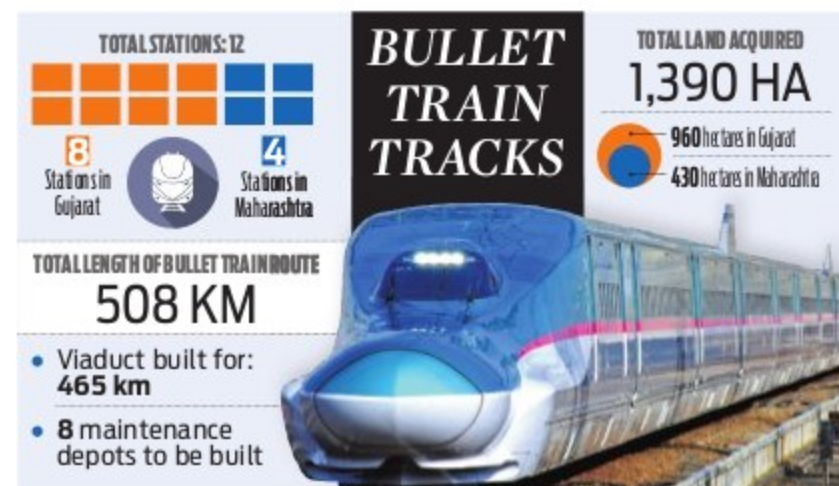
RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

ALL railway stations along the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail corridor, which spans 508 kilometres and includes 12 railway stations, will have 100% green building attributes, according to Railway Ministry officials.

The construction is underway, and the first bullet train expected to be operational by 2026. Slight delays could push the timeline to mid-2027.

According to officials, the architectural design of each of the 12 stations will reflect the unique cultural identity of the city in which it is located. "The design of green buildings at each station will foster a strong connection with local communities, instilling a sense of pride and ownership in the high-speed rail network. These stations will boast a contemporary architectural facade and modern, state-of-the-art finishes," the National High-Speed Rail Corporation stated.

To enhance connectivity, the stations will serve as integrat-



ed transport hubs, providing seamless connections to other transit modes such as metro systems, buses, taxis, and autorickshaws. The design incorporates sustainability features, including water-efficient fixtures, green construction materials, energy-saving lighting, and multimodal transport integration.

The green stations on the bullet train route will have also "elements of sustainability featured right in the design, that includes water-efficient fix-

tures, green-pro products for construction, energy efficient light fittings, and multimodal integration with other transport modes, both existing and proposed," said an official.

"Both passive and active energy-saving measures will reduce energy consumption. Integrated solar panels will be installed on station rooftops to lower energy usage. Large windows will allow natural light and ventilation, reducing the need for artificial lighting and air conditioning," he added.

Dallewal health worsens amid chorus for meeting

Doctors say farmer leader's vitals fluctuating, ketone levels high

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

AS the fast-unto-death by farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal entered its 47th day on Saturday, his health has worsened significantly, with low blood pressure, fluctuating vitals, and the looming threat of cardiac arrest, doctors said.

Leaders of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Morcha and SKM (Non-Political) urged the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) leadership to advance their meeting from January 15 to Sunday or Monday, proposing that it be held at the Khanauri border instead of Patiala.

"The condition of Dallewal is critical as his potassium and sodium levels are low and dropping because he is not consuming anything other than water. A drop in sodium levels causes dizziness and difficulty in concentration. His muscle mass has decreased manifold, and he has become like a skeleton... His overall health parameters are not good," Dr Avtar Singh, heading the medical team at Khanauri border said.

He said the 75-year-old leader is lying in the tractor trolley amid biting cold conditions. "Anything can happen at any



'Change meeting location to Khanauri border'

Leaders of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Morcha and SKM (Non-Political) urged the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) leadership to advance their meeting from January 15 to Sunday or Monday, proposing that it be held at the Khanauri border instead of Patiala.

time," Dr Singh said. "If we try to make him sit for a couple of minutes, his blood pressure drops. His blood pressure is usually around 90. To stabilise it, his legs must be kept elevated. If the pillow supporting his feet is removed, his blood pressure drops further. The pressure stabilises only when his legs are elevated to improve blood flow to the heart and brain. When he lies flat, his blood pressure falls below 90. His vitals are fluctuating, and

cardiac arrest can occur at any time," he said.

Sharing the latest medical reports, SKM (Non-Political) leader Abhimanyu Kohar said, "The tests conducted indicate that Dallewal's condition is not at all good. His protein levels are very low, and his ketone levels are more than 6.53." SKM leader Surjit Singh said, "As Dallewal's health is deteriorating, we are requesting our leaders to come to Khanauri on Sunday or the day after."

4 bodies found, 5 still trapped in Assam coal mine

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Guwahati

THE bodies of three miners, who were trapped inside a coal mine in Assam's Dima Hasao district, were recovered by the personnel of Army, Navy and National Disaster Response Force during a joint operation on Saturday.

The deceased were identified as Lijen Magar (27) of Kalamati village of Umrangso in Dima Hasao, Khushi Mohan Rai (57) of Magergaon in Kokrajhar district and Sarat Goyary (37) of Thailapara in Sonitpur district. Two of the bodies were recovered by Army and NDRF while the third by Army and Navy, officials said.

With these, bodies of four miners have been recovered so far. On January 8, body of a Nepalese citizen, Ganga Bahadur Shrestha, was recovered.

Officials said efforts continue to rescue the remaining five miners.

"A search and rescue operation is being conducted with the help of an underwater remotely operated vehicle. The water level of the mine is currently 12 metres," a government statement read.

It added that dewatering was carried out with the help of five water pumps throughout the day.

23 injured as Kannauj railway station building collapses, rescue ops on

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

AT least 23 people were injured when an under-construction building at the Kannauj Railway Station collapsed on Saturday afternoon, trapping around two dozen workers under the rubble, officials said.

Six of them were pulled out and rushed to hospital. Three of them sustained critical injuries and were sent to KGMU Trauma Centre in Lucknow for treatment.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath, while directing officials to ensure safe recovery of those trapped inside, rushed two teams of the State Disaster Relief Force from Lucknow to assist in rescue operation along with a dog squad.

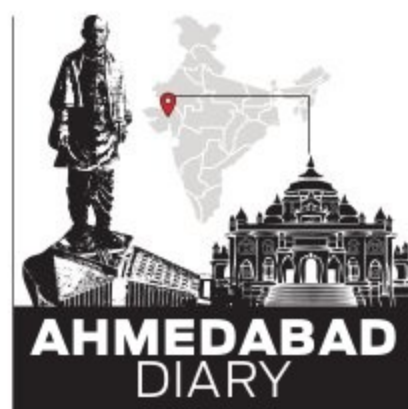
The visuals from the site were replete with scenes of chaos and confusion with crowds, clouds of dust, and broken beams as people tried to rescue those who were feared trapped. IG, Kanpur Range, Jogendra Kumar said that the incident was reported around 2.30 pm when around 35 laborers were engaged in construction work. No casualty has been reported so far.

"However, SDRF teams are



scanning the area to negate the presence of any human body. A probe will be conducted into the incident. "According to preliminary information, the incident occurred when the under-construction shuttering of the roof collapsed," said District Magistrate Shubhrant Kumar Shukla added that the priority was to rescue the trapped workers. "We are using all resources for the rescue efforts," said Shukla.

Meanwhile, UP Minister of State (Independent Charge), Social Welfare, Aseem Arun said, "The rescue operation is underway." The construction work was being done for the new terminal of Kannauj railway station under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, Arun said.



DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA

Our correspondent in Gujarat

dilipsingh@newindianexpress.com

Rules to curb smartphone use among children

Citing concerns for their physical and mental health, Gujarat is set to issue guidelines aimed at curbing smartphone use among children. Key measures include banning mobile phone use by teachers in classrooms, prohibiting primary school students from bringing phones to school, and urging parents to avoid using social media in front of their children. State Education Minister Pratul Pansheriya chaired a meeting with senior officials to address the "negative effects of social media through smartphones" on children. The government claims to be the first in the country to introduce such guidelines targeting teachers, parents, and students.



Internal strife delays BJP prez announcement

The state BJP is all set to announce its city and district presidents, but internal discord is reportedly delaying the process. According to sources, the matter has reached the party's high command in the national capital, where the final decision awaits approval. Meanwhile, leaders are scrambling to position their loyalists within the organization. The selection process recently concluded at city and district BJP offices across the state, with a flood of contenders vying for the coveted posts. Fierce lobbying has created confusion among observers, as strong candidates push their cases all the way to Kamalam, sparking competition.

Factional feud, viral audio rock Palitana BJP

Internal rifts within the Palitana BJP have come to light after an alleged audio of MLA Bhikha Baraiya abusing a Taluka Panchayat officer goes viral. The audio reportedly reveals the MLA pressuring the officer to approve construction work files and using abusive language over a five-day delay. The incident follows widespread factionalism in Amreli BJP, where a letter scandal against an MLA made statewide headlines. In Palitana, the viral audio has sparked unease among taluka and district panchayat officials.

After hospital death, Bengal firm blacklisted

SULAGNA SENGUPTA @ Kolkata

WEST Bengal's Health Department has blacklisted West Bengal Pharmaceuticals, the company responsible for a batch of spurious saline that resulted in a woman's death at Midnapore medical College and Hospital. Mamoni Rui Das (21) had delivered a baby on Wednesday. The next day, her condition started to deteriorate, and she was shifted to the ICU. She succumbed on Friday.

Following the incident, the state health department instructed the Midnapore medical College authorities to stop providing Ringer lactate and seven other medicines.

A high-power committee has been formed to probe the incident and submit the report on Monday. The critically ill patients, who remain in the ICU, are under close observation as hospital authorities face mounting accusations of administering expired saline.

The victim's relatives have lodged a police complaint alleging that the death and illnesses were caused by either improper treatment or the use of expired medical supplies.

The existing batch of saline water has been ordered to be replaced with a fresh batch of stock.

'Punishment': 100 girl students forced to take off shirts inside school

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

IN a shocking incident, more than 100 girl students from Class 10 at Carmel school in Dhanbad were subjected to humiliation when they were forced to remove their shirts as punishment for celebrating Pen Day on Thursday. They were sent home wearing only their blazers without any shirt underneath.

Justifying the act, the school principal said she took the step as she did not want the image of the school to be compromised.

Notably, the children were celebrating Pen Day on the last day of school and were scribbling good wishes on each other's shirts. When Principal M Devashree learnt about it, she got annoyed. She told the students that if the children go out of the school with dirty shirts, the school's image will be maligned and then she made them remove their shirts.

The incident caused significant outrage among the guardians. Since the school was closed on Friday, they visited Dhanbad on Saturday to lodge a complaint with the Deputy

Commissioner, condemning the principal's behaviour.

According to the parents, around 100 girls were sent home wearing only blazers without any shirts underneath. The girls were asked to remove their shirts in front of male teachers in the school campus itself, they alleged.

"Scared by the principal's attitude, the girls removed their shirts in the campus itself. Around 20 girls had brought shirts with them, but around 100 girls came out of the school campus only in blazers and without their shirts," alleged one of the parents.

The parents met the Deputy Commissioner on Saturday and demanded action against the Principal under the POCSO Act.

Taking the matter seriously, DC Madhvi Mishra ordered a thorough investigation into the incident and formed a five-member committee, comprising the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), District Education Officer (DEO), District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO), Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), and office in-charge of Jharia police station.



EVMS in, ballot papers out in C'garh U-turn

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

THE Chhattisgarh BJP government is now preparing to hold the urban bodies polls with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMS). The decision is likely to remain for a 3-tier panchayat polls too. Earlier, it was announced that the elections will be held using ballot papers.

The Chhattisgarh State Election Commission has instructed all district election officials to prepare conducting local bodies' polls by EVMS. The reservation process and allocation for the elections have been completed. "The state government has accomplished the task of reservation in terms of elections. Now, the commission will declare the dates for the polls", said deputy CM and urban administration minister Arun Sao.

The decision has led to a war of words with the Congress expressing its suspicion on alleged potential manipulation of EVM. "We demand the polls be held by ballot papers only. Since the BJP government has nothing to show to the people, it appears confused," said Sushil Anand Shukla, Congress media cell chairman.

The local bodies polls will be held in consonance with the formula of one state-one election, Sao said. Holding simultaneous polls will carry the benefit of reduction of expenses and ease the burden on state administrative machinery.



Rebels wreak havoc for BJP, Cong in U'khand

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

IN Uttarakhand, the long-awaited local body elections are set to take place on January 23, a year later than initially planned. In light of significant challenges posed by rebel candidates, the BJP has expelled 124 of its rebels, while the Congress party has taken similar action against 100 of its own members, according to reports.

These dissenting figures are proving to be a major headache for both parties as they prepare for the upcoming elections, which will include contests for 11 mayoral seats, 44 municipal council positions, and 47 nagar panchayat posts. Party's BJP president Mahendra Bhatt stated during a press interaction, "CM Dhama, along with Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath, will conduct public rallies in Haldwani, Rishikesh, and Rudrapur."

BJP's state media in-charge Manveer Singh Chouhan said, "Despite significant efforts, those BJP leaders who are contesting against the party's official candidates have been expelled from the party with immediate effect."

The Congress is grappling with similar challenges in the electoral arena due to its rebels. Speaking to this daily, Amarjeet Singh, the spokesperson and state media in-charge of the Congress party, revealed, "At first glance, Congress has expelled 18 rebels who are still contesting against the official candidates."



Crash course on individual rights at Maha Kumbh

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

MAHA Kumbh bids to blend spirituality with a message of justice, transparency, and individual rights. In order to this, a Judges' Colony and cottages for Lokayuktas, Information Commissioners, and members of Bar Council are being set up.

For 45 days, judges, lokayuktas, information commissioners, and lawyers are expected to stay with the public, engaging with them to provide insights into justice, the Right to Information, and related aspects.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath recently visited Sector 23 of Maha Kumbh nagar to inspect the Judges' Colony. More than 150 cottages are being constructed in Sector 23 and near Kila Ghat to accommodate officials and ensure seamless interactions.

The official spokesman said Mahakumbh is more than just a religious event. It would serve as a platform where pilgrims can connect not only spiritually but learn about their rights and digital tools for justice. "Maha Kumbh is not just a confluence of rivers but an opportunity to raise social aware-



Minor's sainthood reversed, expelled along with guru

The 13-year-old 'Sanyasin' Gauri Giri, who was initiated into sainthood by Shri Mahant Kaushal Giri of Juna Akhara at Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, was expelled from the Akhara and the Mahakumbh area along with her guru. The decision was taken after finding out that Shri Mahant Kaushal Giri failed to produce documents about the initiation of Rakhi Singh, who was renamed as Gauri Giri after given sainthood.

ness," said the spokesman.

For further assistance to the pilgrims, free legal aid centers are coming up across the area. The High Court Bar Association has also established a camp near the lost-and-found centre in Sector 4, where lawyers will provide legal assistance to visitors and raise awareness about the laws.

Uttar Pradesh State Information Commissioner Virendra Singh Vats said that Maha Kumbh would offer pilgrims an opportunity to learn how to utilize the Right to Information (RTI). The Information Commission aims to empower citizens with knowledge about their rights and strengthen the fight against corruption.

Truth can't be hidden for long: Yogi in Ayodhya

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Lucknow

SAYING that truth could not be hidden for long, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the Ram Temple in Ayodhya was the testimony to this notion. However, he attributed the success of the temple to the sacrifices of devotees, saints and RSS leadership.

While participating in the first anniversary celebrations of consecration of Ram Lalla in the Sanctum Sanctorum of Ram temple in Ayodhya on Saturday, Yogi said the construction of the temple sent a powerful message to suppressed civilizations and cultures worldwide that rights could be reclaimed through democratic and constitutional means.

Reiterating his views on 'Katenge-Batenge' catchline, the CM said that when the society was divided, places of worship were insulted.

Huge rush to Ajmer dargah, locals step in as all hotel rooms booked

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

AMID the controversy over the claims that the Ajmer Dargah is built over a Hindu temple, a record number of pilgrims attended the 813th Urs of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. The turnout this year was double that of the previous year, dargah committee sources said. The rituals of Bade Kul and Jumme ki Namaz were observed with fervor.

Pilgrims from many countries, including 89 from Pakistan, thronged the dargah to seek the blessings of the Sufi saint. The rooms of over 6,000 hotels in Ajmer proved insufficient for the pilgrims. Locals opened their homes as makeshift guesthouses to accommodate the devotees.

The Anjuman Committee revealed that while no official record of chhaadar offerings is maintained, an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 chhaadar were presented daily during the Urs. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Rajasthan CM Bhajanlal Sharma,



and Delhi former CM Arvind Kejriwal also sent chhaadar.

A delegation of pilgrims from Pakistan, led by second Secretary of the Pakistan high commission Tariq Masroof, offered a chhaadar on behalf of Pakistan Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. The delegation later returned to Pakistan via a special train under tight security. Speaking to the media, one pilgrim expressed prayers for peace and prosperity. "We all came to pray for peace and brotherhood. May Allah bless everyone, fill everyone's bags,

and bring peace to both India and Pakistan," he said.

Syed Sarwar Chishti, Secretary of the Dargah's Anjuman Committee, dismissed concerns about the controversy's impact, stating that pilgrim numbers only increased. "This year, we have witnessed a larger turnout than before," he said.

Traditionally, the crowds begin to thin after the Chhathi ritual, but this year, even after the Bade Kul ceremony, hotels remained fully booked, and pilgrims continued to arrive. The last time such a large crowd was witnessed was during the 786th Urs.

On September 25, 2024, Hindu Sena president Vishnu Gupta filed a petition claiming that the dargah site was originally a Sankatmochan Mahadev temple. The petition cited a 114-year-old book, Ajmer Historical and Descriptive, by retired judge Harbilas Sarda. A chapter of the book asserts that a Lord Shiva temple once stood at the dargah's location.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: THE DEBATE CONTINUES

As per law, in most states working hour limit is set at 48-hour week

UMA KANNAN @Bengaluru

LARSEN & TOUBRO chairman SN Subrahmanyam's 90-hour-week comment has once again brought back the work-life balance debate. In an internal meeting, he told employees, "I regret I am not able to make you work on Sundays." Infosys founder Narayana Murthy also had pitched for a 70-hour work week that ignited the heated debate. Ola CEO Bhavish Aggarwal too had supported Murthy's comment saying he is 'fully in sync' with his direction to the youth.

The growing debate on the issue necessarily points to widening generational rifts in enterprises, points out human resource experts.

Enterprise leadership today holds a varying mix of baby boomers, generation X-ers and millennials, and it shows when recurring issues like work from home and flexibility re-emerge, says Kamal Karanth, co-founder of Xpheno, a specialist staffing firm.

"The definitions of effort, intensity, consistency and productivity keep evolving with generations, and the resultant frictions are here to stay. Even if you keep the opinions aside, it seems mandatory for all leaders to know that there's a thin line between 'within and without' of enterprises," he adds.

The founder of Xpheno points out that it's safe to assume that what happens in townhalls and reviews can and may find its way out for public consumption in a highly digitally invaded world of work. It



Working hard and smart is what I believe in, but turning life into a perpetual office shift? That's a recipe for burnout, not success. Work-life balance isn't optional, it's essential

Harsh Goenka, chairman, RPG Group

Time management, prioritising tasks as per the company's needs are essential. While maintaining balance, it's key to be adaptable and willing to go extra mile occasionally

Neeti Sharma, CEO, TeamLease Digital

It is not right to say the CEO/promoter is working 70 hrs because he is the owner and gets paid much more. You have to ask why a person was able to become CEO. Your choice

Samir Arora, founder, Helios Capital

would be, hence, prudent to address the internal audience with the same caution and poise as addressing an external audience.

EMPLOYEES' WELLBEING

In its Talent Trends 2024 report, Michael Page found that for people in all age groups, work-life balance remains top priority. The report said in India 41% of respondents would refuse a promotion to maintain wellbeing.

The death of a young woman at EY and untimely deaths of several business leaders including Table Space founder Amit Banerji in recent times highlight the importance of health in high-stress professions.

Rishad Premji, executive chairman, Wipro Limited, re-

cently at an event emphasised the importance of work-life balance. He said organisations are never going to work at it for you and that the concept of work-life has also changed.

While some have supported the idea of long hours of work, others such as Rajiv Bajaj and Harsh Goenka went against the L&T chief's comment.

RPG Group chief Harsh Goenka said, "Working hard and smart is what I believe in, but turning life into a perpetual office shift? That's a recipe for burnout, not success. Work-life balance isn't optional, it's essential."

Helios Capital founder Samir Arora said in the beginning one has to work harder than others to learn, get noticed and get ahead.

"It is not right to say that the

CEO/promoter is working 70 hrs because he is the owner and gets paid much more etc. You have to ask, why a person was able to become CEO or first generation promoter or whatever in the first place. Your choice," he posted on X.

Neeti Sharma, CEO, TeamLease Digital, said companies can help by being understanding and flexible when needed, respecting employees' time, and supporting their overall well-being. This leads to happier and more productive teams.

"Employees also have a part to play. Open communication with managers about work boundaries and time commitments is key. Effective time management and prioritising tasks as per the company's needs are essential. While maintaining balance, it's important to be adaptable and willing to go the extra mile occasionally. When both sides work together, it creates a more relaxed and motivated work environment. This balanced approach benefits both employees and the company," she added.

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

Under the Shops and Establishments Act, every state in India defines the maximum number of weekly working hours for employees. In most states, this limit is set at 48 hours per week. "In India, working hours are primarily regulated under the Factories Act, 1948 (for factories) and the state-specific shops and establishments acts for commercial establishments," Preetha S, Partner, JSA Advocates & Solicitors said.

The laws prescribe a nine-hour work-day and 48 hours work-week. It contains provisions with respect to overtime pay for any hours worked beyond the prescribed limit, besides ensuring that they receive adequate rest periods and weekly off days, she added.

GRAPPLING WITH DONALD TRUMP'S NEW IMPERIALISM

GURBIR SINGH

AS the world awaits with trepidation for Donald Trump's second presidency, allies and foes alike are agast at his threat to redraw the map of the Western Hemisphere. Trump's outrageous moves to 'buy out' Greenland, or to take over the Panama Canal is not just about making 'Making America Great Again'; it is about reviving neo-colonialism. We thought imperialism was dead and gone. With Trump, it is back with a vengeance!

It started with Greenland. Last month, Trump posted on his Truth Social platform that "ownership and control of Greenland is an absolute necessity" for "economic security". Perhaps, it has got more to do with the Arctic island's rich mineral wealth and its strategic importance to controlling the northern sea lanes. Denmark has been in control since the 14th century; and the self-governing island was fully integrated with Denmark in 1953.

The US briefly occupied the island after World War II but abandoned its enclaves soon after. Trump restarted an 'ownership' bid in 2018 in his first presidency; and to demonstrate his current seriousness, sent off his son Donald Trump Jr to land his personal Boeing on Greenland's capital, Nuuk.

Denmark's premier Mette Frederiksen has been cautious. "Greenland belongs to the Greenlanders... and it's the Greenlanders themselves who have to define their future," she said. Greenland's 57,000 residents have been more strident, stating their island, with its unique culture and history, was not for sale.

BULLYING LANGUAGE

Trump's attempt to bring back colonial rule in Panama has also met serious push back. The Panama Canal was managed by the US for decades but under a treaty signed by the late US President Jimmy Carter in 1977, it was handed over to the Panamanians on 31 December 1999. Now, the president-elect has called the treaty "a mistake" and threatened to tear it up falsely claiming the Chinese were operating the canal.

Panama's Foreign Minister Javier Martinez-Acha responded by saying that "the only hands operating the canal are Panamanian and that is how it is going to stay".

So far so good. But to extend expansionism to Canada, a long-time, white Caucasian ally

of the US, is incomprehensible. Though he has not threatened military might, Trump has invoked "economic force" to pressure Canada to join as the United States' 51st state. He may not be serious in swallowing Canada, but he is keen on reworking US spending on Canadian goods and military support which he claims gives the US no benefits.

His aggressive sabre-rattling has reached the US' southern neighbour too. "We are going to be changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America, which has a beautiful



SOURAV ROY

ring," Trump said. Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum responded sarcastically proposing North America be renamed "América Mexicana."

What we are seeing is a new culture and language of bullying, euphemistically called 'America First'. And it is not limited to the poor, backward Third World. The 'idiotic' social democrats of Europe too are in the line of fire. Trump's unofficial No. 2, billionaire Elon Musk, has made no secret of working with allies to throw out Britain's democratically-elected Labour Party Prime Minister Keir Starmer. In Germany, Musk has openly sided with the anti-immigration, extreme right wing party, the AfD, and has called for the ouster of Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

'AMERICA FIRST' DOCTRINE

One thing is certain: the com-

ing administration of Donald Trump will never cease to surprise. It's agenda may be muddled, but it is one step ahead of common imagination. When everybody expected a slew of anti-immigrant measures 20 January onwards, the global narrative has shifted to US' expansionist agenda.

Trump is now redefining the Monroe doctrine. In 1823, US President James Munroe warned the European powers to stop interfering in the Western Hemisphere. Trump is taking the doctrine a step further. He is telling Europe not only to lay off; but messaging as a bully does that it will be the US which will now carve up the world as it wants in the interests of its own 'security'.

To make his aggressive, warlike foreign policy sound sensible, the external enemy has been identified. It is China, Iran and Russia - in that order - who are portrayed as seeking domination. Thus, the US has to take the battle to new frontiers. This has been the logic of dictators and tyrants through the ages - from Genghis Khan to Adolf Hitler - and it is being played out again.

In the new found aggression, the incredible thing is Trump seems to have no value for carefully stitched alliances like NATO. He had always been dismissive of the NATO bloc, accusing it of piggy-backing on the US for funds. He has said NATO countries should be spending 5 percent of GDP on weapons and security rather than the 'measly' 2 percent currently.

With Canada too Trump seems to have no respect for US' oldest and geographically closest ally. He has threatened to impose 25 percent tariffs on Canada if it fails to protect the US-Canada border from illegal immigration and drugs.

There is little chance the future is going to unravel the way Donald Trump wants. Canada is not going to become the 51st state of the United States; and Greenland will not be bought by Trump. What is happening though is a rising climate of fear and a coming Cold War. Trump is aware of the limitations of this new frontier policy; but what he hopes to do is to solidify the MAGA ranks, and stoke up a new aggressive 'American' patriotism even if it means riding roughshod over the national sentiments of other nations. It is a dangerous policy in the long run. It will earn Donald Trump more enemies and it will make an unstable world even more unstable.

Sebi watchful of 'pump & dump' trades in index heavyweights

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

MARKET regulator Sebi is "watchful" of instances of market players trying to manipulate one segment to profit in another, specifically when a few stocks have high weighting in the index, a senior official said on Saturday.

"When you have indices which have huge weighting on a few handful of stocks, even if there is no manipulation happening, the fear that some people might be manipulating the cash market to derive or drive the derivatives markets and increase volatility is not healthy," Sebi whole-time member Ananth Narayan said here on Saturday addressing the concerns of possible manipulation in the cash market, which could lead to volatility or activ-



ity in the derivatives market to profit some people. While practices of taking bets in both cash and derivatives is not unusual as it is used for hedging or higher profit, the regulator is watchful of any 'pump and dump' under the garb of such trades, he told at a seminar by the Sebi-run National Institute of Securities Markets.

"A burst of activity by a

large player in one market to profit in the other market - a lot of buying followed by a lot of selling in order to profit in the derivatives market. Likewise, marking the close where just at the time of expiry, if there is a lot of activity in cash market to try and get a particular close, these are standard manipulative practices that every regulator in the world watches out for."

"One of the questions that we have is when you have indices trading in futures and options, purely for trading in F&O, not for benchmarks, for mutual funds, not for anything else, should there be restrictions on how much of weighting the top stock, the top three stocks, etc. should have. Now, this is a matter of discussion," he added.

No plan to put more curbs on derivatives: Sebi

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

MARKETS regulator Sebi is not planning more curbs on trading activity in the derivatives segment, but is working on improving the system, including risk management and ease of doing business, a senior Sebi official said on Saturday.

An expert group under G Padmanabhan, a former executive director of the Reserve Bank, is working on bettering the system, and some moves on ease of doing business and better risk management are being mulled, ruling out more curbs on derivatives trade, Sebi whole-time member Ananth Narayan told an even organized by the Sebi-run National Institute of Securities Market here Saturday.

AIG Hospitals to invest ₹800 cr in cancer therapy

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

HYDERABAD-based AIG Hospitals will invest ₹800 crore for installing a Proton Therapy System for treatment of cancer. The Hyderabad-based hospital chain has entered into an agreement to acquire state-of-the-art ProteusONE Proton Therapy System including DynamicARC from IBA, a Belgium-based supplier of equipment and services in the field of proton therapy, considered to be the most advanced form of radiation therapy available today.

With this new delivery technique called DynamicARC proton therapy, the system will be the first of its-kind installation in South-East Asia.

"This strategic acquisition marks a significant milestone in AIG Hospitals' commitment to delivering the most advanced, effective, and accessible cancer care to patients in India," said the company in a statement.

With this acquisition, AIG Hospitals will become only the Third Proton Therapy Centre in the country and the first one in twin Telugu states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

India's economy likely to be weaker in 2025 despite global growth: IMF MD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA @ Washington

THE Indian economy is expected to be "a little weaker" in 2025 despite steady global growth, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has said.

Georgieva also said she expects quite a lot of uncertainty in the world this year mainly around the trade policy of the US. In her annual media roundtable with a group of reporters on Friday, she said global growth is expected to be steady in 2025, but with regional divergence.

Georgieva said she expects the Indian economy to be a little weaker in 2025. However, she did not explain it any further. The World Economy Outlook update week will have more details about it.

"The US is doing quite a bit better than we expected before, the EU is somewhat stall-

ing, (and) India a little weaker," she said. Brazil was facing somewhat higher inflation, she said. In China, the world's second-largest economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was seeing deflationary pressure and ongoing challenges with domestic demand, she said.

"Low-income countries, despite all the efforts they are making, are in a position when any new shock can affect them quite negatively," Georgieva said.

"What we expect in 2025 is to have quite a lot of uncertainty, especially in terms of economic

policies. Not surprisingly, given the size and role of the US economy, there is keen interest globally in the policy directions of the incoming administration, in particular on tariffs, taxes, deregulation and government efficiency," Georgieva said.



Brijendra Pratap Singh takes over as CMD of NALCO

Bhubaneswar: Brijendra Pratap Singh has taken over as Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD) of NALCO at its corporate office here. Prior to joining NALCO, Singh was Director-In-Charge for Bumpur and Durgapur Steel Plant and member on the Board of SAIL. With over 35 years of experience in mines and steel sectors, Singh's strategic vision and deep industry expertise have been instrumental in advancing SAIL's modernisation goals, driving growth and sustainability of steel sector in alignment with the Steel Policy.

Goa celebrated Food & Cultural Festival 2025

Margao: Goa witnessed an unforgettable evening of cultural celebration and entertainment at the Goa Food & Cultural Festival 2025, held in Margao on January 3, 2025.

The event, organised by the Department of Tourism, brought together a rich blend of traditional and contemporary performances, drawing an enthusiastic audience from across the state. The evening commenced with a vibrant inaugural ceremony which was graced by Dr. Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa, Rohan A. Khaunte, Minister for Tourism, IT, E&C, Printing & Stationary, Digambar Kamat, MLA - Margao Constituency; among others.

Business & Beyond



Pratap Singh Shami, SDG RDSO visited Braithwaite & Co. Limited

Kolkata: Pratap Singh Shami, special director general (vendor development) of the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) along with Shri Sanjay Kumar, CMM (G)/ER, Dr. Sunil Kumar Sharma, executive director, QA (mechanical), Kolkata and RDSO team visited Braithwaite & Co. Limited (BCL), a miniratna-1 CPSE under the Ministry of Railways on January 4, 2025. During his visit, Shami conducted a comprehensive inspection of the facility and observed various stages of wagon manufacturing. He expressed keen interest in the production processes, quality control measures, and innovative practices being implemented in the workshop. Shami interacted with the workforce and management, gaining insights into the organisation's efforts to enhance efficiency and meet the growing demand for high-quality rail wagons.

LIC's Bima Sakhi Yojana crosses 50,000 mark

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, launched LIC's BIMA SAKHI Yojana at Panipat, on December 9, 2024. Bima Sakhi Yojana is a step towards Viksit Bharat through women empowerment which will provide social security to the families. LIC of India is proud to be a partner in Viksit Bharat by including women as partners in the nation's progress by providing them with opportunity of becoming BIMA SAKHI and self-reliant.

BoB rolls out programme for emotional, mental health

Mumbai: Bank of Baroda, one of India's leading public sector banks, has rolled out a wellness initiative aimed at nurturing the emotional, mental and psychological wellbeing of its 75,000-plus employees and their family members. The bank has partnered with Truworth Wellness to introduce an enhanced version of its "Employee Assistance Programme" (EAP) - a pioneering initiative in the corporate wellness space.



INDIA CONNECT, IT'S OFFICIAL TOO

With growing popularity of cricket among Indians, officials like Rao are getting prominence as administrators

GOMESH S @ Sydney

HARISH Rao remembers vividly the first time he was introduced to Indian cricket. Son of late T Janardhan Rao, a doctor, who moved to Australia from Chennai in 1968, Harish was not even a teenager when he met the likes of Bishan Singh Bedi, EAS Prasanna, S Venkataraghavan in the late 1970s when the Indian team toured Down Under. Things were different back then.

The Indian population was not as big as it is right now. The players used to oblige invitations from Indian families who they knew or were of some kind of influence. Players and fan used to mingle much more freely. Harish still remembers when his father used to invite players to his house. He used to double up as a doctor for the team as well.

"My father was a doctor and in those times, the Indian team did not have one travelling with them. So he ended up helping them if they had any problem," Harish tells this daily. "Those days there were foreign exchange restrictions. My father used to organise dinners, the team used to go to different people's houses, even arrange transportation. I've been involved with the Indian cricket team, at least, from those early days right through till about when Sachin Tendulkar came and played in Australia."

Harish was there when the Indian team featuring Sunil Gavaskar, Ravi Shastri, L Sivaramakrishnan and others won the World Championship of Cricket Down Under in 1985. He remembers interacting with



The scoreboard shows the official attendance on the last day of the 4th Test between Australia and India at the MCG | AP

almost every single squad member who helped India beat Pakistan to win the final. That was almost four decades ago.

An administrator now

Today, Harish is a non-executive director on the board of Cricket Victoria. In fact, he is believed to be the first Indian-Australian to be appointed on the board of Cricket Victoria in its almost 150-year history. It's been close two years since Harish took charge and for him, it's been an "enlightening experience" so far.

While Harish did play cricket at school-level, he couldn't continue because of other commitments and took his journey towards commerce and business. He went to become an Indian Australian Business leader, who founded the Australia India Chamber of Commerce, and was a past board member of the Australia India Institute before coming

back to his cricketing roots. The turning point of that happened was the India versus Pakistan 2022 Men's T20 World Cup match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Virat Kohli played an sensational innings as India beat Pakistan in a last-ball thriller with 90,293 fans cheering on.

Witnessing the contest and the atmosphere, Cricket Victoria board felt the need to get the Indian community involved. They reached out to Harish to join the board and since then, it's been a quite a bit of a journey for him. "I've been involved in the Australia-India business relationship over many years, but not from a cricketing point of view. I think what the Cricket Victoria Board was keen to do was to try and build upon the momentum that's happened within the Australia-India relationship and look at it from the sports angle, especially cricket.

Having me as part of that helps them be able to build that profile with the Australia-India relationship and the Indian diaspora here in Victoria," Harish explains. "There's been a huge momentum in the Australia-India relationship over the last few years, especially after the signing of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement. That has filtered through to many different aspects of the relationship. We've set up the Melbourne Cricket Academy in India. It's a joint venture with the Khelomore Group in Mumbai. That's the first franchise, but there will be other franchises around the country as time progresses," he adds.

Building bridges

While reconnecting with cricket is about building relationships between the two countries, for Harish, it is also about continuing his familial relationship with the sport going back to the early 1900s. His great grandfa-

ther Bandi Sri Ramulu Naidu, who studied at Clifton College in England, led the Indians team in the Madras Presidency Match against the Europeans (Europeans living in India) in 1908-09. This "Presidency Hindus" versus "Presidency Europeans" match was played at the now MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai. Harish's grandfather, BS Badradi played first-class cricket for Madras, representing them in the Ranji Trophy alongside MJ Gopalan, CP Johnstone, and AG Ram Singh. And his father Janardhan played cricket for Madras Medical College before migrating to Australia. Although Janardhan passed away last year, he was there to see Harish join the Cricket Victoria board. "He was very proud. He was actually in the Ranji squad in his time, though he didn't play any matches, when he was at Madras Medical College. He was an avid cricket supporter. He was extremely proud when I told him that I'd been asked to be on the board at Cricket Victoria. I hope we can really use the opportunity that I'm there to actually grow cricket between Victoria and India into the future. But no, he was very proud of my appointment," says Harish.

If the 2022 India versus Pakistan T20 WC match was the tipping point, the recent Boxing Day Test between India and Australia saw record-breaking crowds at the MCG. With 373,691 fans attending across five days, it became the most attended Test match ever in Australia. "It was absolutely amazing. To go for five days and to have the largest crowd since Don Bradman's team played, and that was a six-day Test, it's amazing."

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Certificates from WFI not valid for recruitment: Rlys

FIROZ MIRZA @ Chennai

SINCE December 24, 2023 when the sports ministry suspended newly-elected executive council of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), certificates issued by the federation have not been considered for recruitment purposes by the Indian Railways, one of the biggest employers of the athletes in the country.

Reiterating its policy, the Railways on January 10, 2025 issued a circular to general managers of all zonal railways and production and other units regarding the validity of certificates issued by the WFI. Citing the sports ministry's order, the circular once again made it clear that WFI's certificates will not be considered for recruitment and other establishment purposes. "Since neither any instruction has been received from Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYA&S) nor available on the official website of MoYA&S till date regarding revocation of the suspension of EC of WFI or regarding recognition of championships conducted by the suspended EC of WFI till date, the certificates issued for the events conducted by WFI after 24-12-23 are not to be considered for recruitment and other establishment purposes as per the MoYA&S's instructed dated 7-1-24 and 30-1-24," read the circular.

The circular, however, says that certificates of 2023 senior national championships organised in Jaipur from February 2 to 5 last year under the supervision of the IOA-appointed ad-hoc committee and hosted by the Railways will be treated as recognised and sanctioned.

Interestingly, the Railways has announced vacancies in sports quota for the year 2024-25 for 21 posts in group C and 43 posts in group D in August 2024. Given the situation, the Railways didn't find several wrestlers eligible as they submitted certificates from tournaments organised by the WFI. Diwakar Rathore, father of wrestler Unnati (59kg), confirmed his daughter's candidature was rejected. "She competed at the Pune nationals organised by the WFI. No specific reasons was given for rejection. Unnati is now hired by Income Tax," Diwakar told this daily.

Railway Recruitment Cell - Western Railway has declared an eligibility list against these vacancies and the same is in possession of this daily. It has shortlisted candidates in three categories - eligible, provisionally eligible and not eligible. Most of those who found themselves in the last category had submitted certificates from tournaments organised by the WFI.

Interestingly, the Indian Army also invited application for direct recruitment of havildar and naib subedar from 22 disciplines but didn't specify validity and invalidity of any tournaments. It only specified the period, in this case between April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2024, during which the athletes should have competed in the international events, junior and senior nationals, Khelo India Games and Youth Games.

Full story: newindianexpress.com



Mohammed Shami

Shami back in India T20I fold

AGENCIES @ Mumbai

NEARLY 14 months after he last played an international match, veteran seamer Mohammed Shami on Saturday returned to the Indian team for the upcoming five-match T20I series against visiting England. The 34-year-old Shami's last outing for India was the 2023 ODI World Cup final against Australia at Ahmedabad on November 19, after which he was out of the team due to ankle injury. He underwent surgery last year. Suryakumar Yadav will lead the 15-member team.

The squad: Suryakumar Yadav (C), Sanju Samson (wk), Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Rinku Singh, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel (vc), Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammad Shami, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Washington Sundar, Dhruv Jurel (wk)

Mohammedan beat Bengaluru

AGENCIES @ Bengaluru

MIRJALOL Kasimov's stunning 88th-minute free-kick secured Mohammedan SC's 1-0 victory over former champions Bengaluru FC, marking their second win of the Indian Super League, here on Saturday.

Bengaluru FC dominated possession with 65.8 per cent and created several early chances, but Mohammedan SC's defense, led by goalkeeper Padam Chhetri, held firm, making key saves to hand the Blues their second successive defeat.

This was Bengaluru FC's fourth defeat from 15 matches, leaving them with 27 points in second place, while Mohammedan SC remain in 12th spot with 10 points.

Later, Mohun Bagan Super Giant stretched their dominance in the Kolkata Derby with a 1-0 win over East Bengal FC in Guwahati.

Malaysia Open: Tough day at office for Sat-Chi

ANMOL GURUNG @ Chennai

OVER the years, doubles specialists, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, have flourished to become a difficult proposition for their rivals at the BWF circuit. They have predominantly been the aggressor and have choked their rivals out with their relentless badminton. But Saturday was a rare sight as the former World No 1 duo, taking part in the men's doubles semifinals of the ongoing Malaysia Open in Kuala Lumpur, was handed the taste of their own medicine.

Kim Won Ho and Seo Seung Jae, partnering for the first time in six years, operated like they have never been apart and stopped the Indian duo from imposing their playing style on them before recording a comfortable 21-10, 21-15 victory. The circumstances are different though. With Malaysia Open being the season-opener, this is an event where the shuttlers generally tend to ignite their engines before planning their drive ahead of a long gruelling journey ahead. Also, Satwik and Chirag had been away from the court for a while.

After a close opening exchange, the Korean pair gradually took control of the opening game with some sharp returns.



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty (R) in action | BWF/BADMINTON PHOTO

After the first break, it was mostly one-way traffic with the Korean pair sealing the game with relative ease. Satwik delivered his trademark smash early on in the second game to show that the World No 9 pair still had plenty of fight left in them. With more urgency in their game, the Indians entered the drinks break with a 11-8 lead. But the Koreans changed the narrative entirely by forcing the Indians to several errors before building on the momentum to seal a spot in the final of the BWF World Tour Super 1000 event. The Indian duo were naturally downcast after this outcome. "They were playing well. We watched them playing in the earlier rounds and we had prepared but I felt they played very well today (Saturday)," Satwik reflected.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

History awaits women's hockey in Ranchi

KALYANI MANGALE @ Chennai

SALIMA Tete is back in Ranchi. The city, crowd, and the Marang Gomeke Jaipal Singh Astro Turf Hockey Stadium brings out mixed feelings for India's captain. This is the place where India reclaimed their Women's Asian Champions Trophy title after seven years in 2023. The same stadium saw a teary and heartbroken Indian team once they narrowly missed their berth in the Paris Olympics in 2024. However, when Tete takes the field at her home ground in the women's Hockey India League, no matter what the result is, she and her teammates would have etched their names in the history books.

"This is a golden opportunity. Not just for the junior players, but for everyone in Indian women's hockey," Tete said, well aware of the importance of the



Salima Tete (L) with captains of Women's Hockey India League teams in Ranchi | HIL

occasion. "We have this platform to show how well we can play. So many Indian players are full of talent, this is their chance to showcase it in front of the crowd and make sure they are knocking on the door of India camp. I want to enjoy playing my hockey this season and help Soorma win matches," India's captain told this daily.

With her team, Soorma Hockey Club, making their debut on 13th January, Tete hopes to see

a familiar face in the audience. Having her father, Sulakshan, a hockey player who helped continue the legacy of the sport in the family, in the stadium would mean the world to Tete and there is a reason behind it. "I know my home is not that close to Ranchi, but my parents will come to watch me play in the HIL there," she said.

"If you have parents' support, you can do absolutely anything. My parents have sup-

ported me from the beginning and they continue to do so today. They worked hard and made sure that I got the platform for my hockey. I think it is time for me to play well and acknowledge everything they have done. When it came to hockey, my father never stopped me from doing anything. He instilled in me right from an early age that I should focus on doing everything in my capacity to help the team and not focus on the result. Even now when I go home he keeps telling me to concentrate on my process and results will follow."

"My father is a farmer and my mother is a homemaker, so I know the problems they face, but time and again, they have stood behind me. I think that makes me immensely proud to have parents like them," Tete, who was visibly emotional, said. Full story: newindianexpress.com

Hyderabad, UP Rudras win

ROURKELA: Hyderabad Toofans scored a thrilling 4-3 penalty shoot-out victory over Soorma Hockey Club after the teams were locked in a 1-1 stalemate at the end of regulation time in a Hockey India League match here on Saturday. Nicolas Della Torre (8th) gave Soorma Hockey Club the lead in the first quarter before Amandeep Lakra (40th) brought the Hyderabad Toofans back on level terms with a fierce drag flick. Hyderabad Toofans goalkeeper Dominic Dixon's heroics in sudden death then secured a bonus point for the side. Meanwhile, UP Rudras notched up an important 3-1 win against Delhi SG Pipers.



Amandeep Lakra scored the equaliser for Hyderabad Toofans on Saturday | HIL

Maharashtra, Karnataka in semis

AGENCIES @ Vadodara

FOUR-TIME champions Karnataka held their nerves to edge out hosts Baroda by five runs, while Maharashtra outplayed Punjab by 70 runs to enter the Vijay Hazare Trophy semifinals here on Saturday.

Teenager Arshin Kulkarni struck a composed maiden List A century, while wicketkeeper-batter Nitin Naik hit an explosive unbeaten fifty to power Maharashtra to a handsome win over Punjab.

Meanwhile, opener Devdutt Padikkal marked his return to domestic cricket with a scintillating century before Prasidh Krishna's game-changing spell in the death overs propelled Karnataka to a thrilling win



Devdutt Padikkal | SPORTZPICS

over Baroda. Opting to bowl, Baroda faced an in-form Padikkal, who anchored the Karnataka innings with a superb 102 off 99 balls. Karnataka posted a challenging total of 281/8 in their 50 overs. Opener Shashwat Rawat's 104 kept Baroda in the hunt, and they needed just 44 runs from the last five overs with the set batter still at

the crease. However, Prasidh Krishna (2/60) turned the match on its head in the 47th over. He first dismissed the Rawat and then removed Mahesh Pithiya off the fifth ball. Baroda needed 12 runs with two wickets in hand in the final over. But panic set in, and the duo of Raj Limbani and Bhargav Bhatt found themselves run out in four balls while attempting risky runs. Brief scores: Maharashtra 275/6 in 50 ovs (Arshin Kulkarni 107, Ankit Bavne 60, Nikhil Naik 52 not out; Arshdeep Singh 3/56) bt Punjab 205 in 44.4 ovs (Arshdeep 49; Mukesh Choudhary 3/44, Pradeep Dade 2/31); Karnataka 281/8 in 50 ovs (Devdutt Padikkal 102, KV Aneesh 52; Atit Sheth 3/41, Raj Limbani 3/47) bt Baroda 276 in 49.5 ovs (Shashwat Rawat 104, Atit Sheth 56; Vasuki Koushik 2/39, Prasidh Krishna 2/60, Abhilash Shetty 2/70, Shreyas Gopal 2/38).

SA20: Super Giants pip Capitals by two runs

AGENCIES @ Durban

DURBAN'S Super Giants claimed a dramatic two-run victory over Pretoria Capitals in their high-scoring SA20, despite fireworks from Will Jacks (64) and Rahmanullah Gurbaz (89). Chasing 210 to win, Jacks and Gurbaz put on 154 for the opening wicket as Pretoria Capitals looked set for a big win, but last year's SA20 finalists DSG came back strong to restrict their opponents to 207 for six in their allotted 20 overs.

Super Giants had posted 209 for 4. Noor Ahmad (2/34) dismissed both the set batters in

two consecutive overs to provide DSG with the opening they needed and his side capitalised as the opposition had no reply.

Jacks made a 35-ball 64 with five sixes and three fours whereas Gurbaz clobbered seven sixes to make 89 off 43 balls before they both fell to the left-arm Afghan spinner. Earlier in the first half, a rapid 19-ball 45 not out from Wiaan Mulder and Kane Williamson's unbeaten 60 off 40 balls helped Super Giants finish on a high. On Saturday, Paarl Royals recorded a nine-wicket win over Sunrisers Eastern Cape. Teenager Lhuan-dre Pretorius, who 51-ball 97, was the standout performer.

EXPRESS READ

World C'ships medallist Nishant turns pro

NEW DELHI: World championship bronze medallist boxer Nishant Dev has turned professional. One of the most consistent Indian boxers in recent times, Dev, who represented India at the Paris Olympics, has signed with Eddie Hearn and Matchroom Boxing. He will make his debut in Las Vegas on January 25.

BCCI SGM: Saikia and Bhatia in focus

MUMBAI: Devajit Saikia and Prabhjit Singh Bhatia will be officially elected as the BCCI secretary and treasurer respectively during the Special General Meeting (SGM) here on Sunday. Saikia has been working as the BCCI interim secretary since Jay Shah took over as the ICC chairman on December 1.

Liverpool overcome Stanley 4-0 in FA Cup

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's bid to win an unprecedented quadruple is still on after a 4-0 victory over Accrington Stanley in the FA Cup on Saturday. The Premier League and Champions League leader is also into the semifinals of the English League Cup. And fourth-division, Top-flight Wolverhampton also advanced with a 1-0 win at second-division Bristol City.

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

WHEN dealing with major powers, context is everything. The farewell visit of the US National Security Adviser to India, aimed at finalising certain details of ongoing nuclear and high-technology cooperation, brought the landmark 2008 civil nuclear deal back into focus. The deal, finalised after three years of complex negotiations, marked a turning point where both sides overcame past hesitations and the bitterness of their nuclear history, aiming to set their strategic relationship on an irreversible course.

However, nearly two decades after the pact was signed, certain hurdles remain in realising its full potential, primarily due to issues related to India's nuclear liability law and several key Indian atomic institutions still being on the US blacklist (entity list).

Significance of the India-US nuclear deal of 2008

The deal ended India's long winter of nuclear isolation as it refrained from signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which New Delhi considers discriminatory, and paved the way for civil nuclear cooperation with other countries. The US played a significant role in India's nuclear and space programmes in the decades following the country's independence, but India stayed away from developing nuclear weapons. The global nuclear landscape, however, changed after 1968.

The NPT signed that year, was an agreement between major nuclear and non-nuclear powers aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear technology. Though it didn't prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, it was a significant achievement, at times a convenient tool, for arms control advocates, including the US to come after India following New Delhi's nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998.

Following the NPT, several export control and arms control regimes were established, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 1974, which comprised a group of countries working to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons through export controls and guidelines. The Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), formed in 1996, is a voluntary agreement between countries to regulate the export of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies. The Australia Group, created in 1984, is an informal arrangement that helps exporting or transshipping countries minimise the risk of contributing to the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons (CBW).

The non-proliferation discussions of the 1990s led to India being denied access to critical dual-use technologies, and the 1998

nuclear tests worsened the situation. However, on the positive side, these challenges also created an opportunity for India and the US to engage in dialogue, looking at the ways to resolve their differences over nuclear and technology-related issues.

The India-US nuclear deal stands as the pinnacle of these conversations and engagements, serving as a foundation for deeper cooperation in high-tech fields during the Modi-Obama and Modi-Trump administrations. But the next major step forward came with the launch of the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICTE), unveiled by India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and his US counterpart Jake Sullivan in 2022.

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL OF INDIA-US NUCLEAR DEAL

NSA Jake Sullivan on his recent capstone visit announced US efforts to finalise necessary steps to delist Indian nuclear entities, which will promote civil nuclear cooperation and resilient clean energy supply chains

Why sudden interest in N-energy

The surge in artificial intelligence has fueled demand for huge computing powers and data centers that require vast amounts of electricity. As a result, nuclear power is now gaining appeal among tech giants facing rising energy needs. While it's uncertain how much nuclear energy will meet this demand, companies like Amazon, Microsoft and Google-parent Alphabet are betting big on nuclear power, with Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos backing such initiatives. Though more expensive, nuclear energy is a clean form of energy.

The Americans have yet to reap any commercial benefits from the

nuclear deal for US companies. Of course, the India-US deal was embedded as part of the larger India-US global strategic partnership, touted as part of a transformed relationship between the two countries.

Reflecting on the complex and intricate process of negotiating the nuclear deal, Shivshankar Menon, former Foreign Secretary and a key negotiator of the Indo-US nuclear deal, addressed the criticism that India could not trust the Americans with such a strategically important agreement. In his book, Choices: Inside the Making of Indian Foreign Policy, he argued: "The real answer was that US commercial, strategic, and other interests, once enmeshed into the Indian programme, would ensure continuity." That's true as the nuclear deal remained a focal point of the engagements with the two countries in the larger context of their high-technology and nuclear cooperation since 2008.

The Biden administration had unexpectedly given new momentum to the US-India nuclear partnership. Given Biden's pivotal role in the US Senate in sealing the US-India civil nuclear agreement, he as president, actively supported the goal of bringing this accord to fruition by completing negotiations for US nuclear reactor sales to India.

This renewed focus is reflected in the behind-the-scenes discussions between the two governments. A joint statement issued after Biden's September 2023 visit to India highlighted the two leaders' support for "intensified consultations between the relevant entities on both sides to expand

opportunities for facilitating India-US collaboration in nuclear energy, including the development of next-generation small modular reactor technologies in a collaborative mode."

Impediment of nuclear liability law

Though both the countries reiterated their commitment to the nuclear deal, proposed solutions do not appear to have fully alleviated concerns of the American private nuclear suppliers about India's Nuclear Liability law -- the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLNDA).

They want the liability to rest only with the operator of the nuclear plants, which is the government entity of Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL). But Indian law provides a right to recourse through which the operator of the nuclear plant can hold the suppliers liable for faulty equipment or design of the reactors.

The supplier liability clause has its origin in the lessons learnt from the Bhopal gas tragedy of 1984. It so happened that in 2010, while Parliament was debating the nuclear liability legislation, the Supreme Court issued a ruling that reaffirmed an earlier settlement related to the 1984 gas leak tragedy at Union Carbide Corporation's chemical plant in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. The court's judgment abruptly brought the horrific accident back into public consciousness, reminding the Indian legislators of the thousands of deaths and tens of thousands of injuries.

Although various measures have been suggested to ease the law for suppliers, such as creating an insurance pool, American suppliers do not appear to be sufficiently convinced, as any additional financial burden would increase costs.

Benefits from civil nuclear deal

India undoubtedly reaped significant benefits from the civil nuclear agreement with the US since its announcement in 2005. To this day, New Delhi has leveraged this agreement to secure continued advantages, including more liberal licensing of controlled commodities, the further removal of Indian entities from the US entity list, and access to advanced technologies and weapons from the US. India became a member of Wassenaar Arrangement in 2017 and joined Australia Group next year besides stepping up civil cooperation with many countries.

But this led to unease in some quarters in the US with many experts pointing out the delay in setting in commercial cooperation between the two countries. One of early proponents of the deals, Ashley J Tellis, has been very vocal. "It is a pity that India has not moved far or fast to make good on the formal commitment that its

PURPOSE OF THE ENTITY LIST

The US Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) first introduced the entity list in February 1997 to inform the public about entities involved in activities that could heighten the risk of exported, reexported, or in-country items being diverted to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programmes. Over time, the criteria for inclusion on the list expanded to encompass entities engaged in activities that are subject to sanctions by the US State Department or are deemed contrary to US national security and foreign policy interests.

own government made to the United States in 2008 in regard to fulfilling its obligations to purchase US nuclear reactors. Prime Minister Modi should now consider addressing this issue expeditiously so as to sustain the transformation of the US-India relationship initiated by his predecessors and that he himself has heavily invested in," he said.

Capstone visit

Though on a farewell trip, Sullivan announced the lifting of many existing restrictions on nuclear and high technology cooperation. "I can announce

that the United States is now finalising the necessary steps to remove long-standing regulations that have prevented civil nuclear cooperation between India's leading nuclear entities and US companies," he said during a speech at the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi.

That means the US is in the final stages of removing Indian government entities—such as the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre (IGCAR), and Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL)—from its entity list.

XPRESSFOCUS

'Yellapragada SubbaRow: A Visionary Worthy of Bharat Ratna'

I LAKSHMI REDDY

Yellapragada SubbaRow, born on January 12, 1895 (today is his 130th birth anniversary), in Bhimavaram, India, was a visionary scientist whose groundbreaking contributions to biochemistry, pharmacology, oncology, and nutritional science left an indelible mark on modern medicine. Despite facing numerous personal and professional challenges, his relentless pursuit of knowledge established him as one of the most influential scientists of the 20th century.

Early Life and Education

Born into a Brahmin family in Andhra Pradesh, where intellectualism was highly valued, SubbaRow's early academic journey was marked by struggles. He failed out of two high schools and only after his father's death did he begin to take his studies seriously. His focus shifted to medicine, and in 1915, he was accepted into Madras Medical College. During India's intensifying struggle for independence, SubbaRow's subtle defiance—wearing a Khadi surgical gown—provoked the ire of his professors, leading him to graduate with a lesser LMS degree instead of an MBBS.

Journey to the United States

The deaths of his two brothers from tropical diseases profoundly affected SubbaRow, motivating him to fight such ailments. In 1923, he journeyed to the United States, determined to pursue research in advanced medical sciences. Initially struggling to have his Indian medical degree recognised, SubbaRow worked as a night porter to support himself, far removed from his scientific ambitions.

Traiblazing Discoveries

SubbaRow's scientific breakthrough came at Harvard Medical School, where he and his mentor Cyrus Fiske developed the Fiske-SubbaRow method, a pivotal technique for measuring phosphorus in biological tissues. This led to the discovery of phosphocreatine and adenosine triphosphate (ATP), now known as



the principal source of energy for metabolic processes. His paper on these findings has been cited over 22,000 times, reflecting its immense impact.

SubbaRow's research, spurred by the loss of his brothers, led to the synthesis of folic acid and its analogs, aminopterin and methotrexate, which became the first drugs to induce remission in childhood acute leukemia.

Although he never received a Nobel Prize, SubbaRow is regarded as the father of targeted cancer chemotherapy.

His contributions also include the discovery of vitamin B12, which cured pernicious anemia, and the development of diethylcarbamazine (Hetrazan), a drug that combats filariasis. Under his leadership at Lederle Laboratories, the first broad-spectrum antibiotic, chlortetracycline (Aureomycin), was discovered, marking the dawn of the antibiotic era.

ALife of Humility and Humanity Despite his scientific accolades, SubbaRow remained humble, deeply influenced by Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission. Twice he considered renouncing his career to pursue asceticism, but both times was convinced by his mother to continue his scientific work. He believed that science could prolong life, but religion gave it meaning.

SubbaRow's generosity and willingness to share credit were legendary. He often remarked, "The victories of science are rarely won single-handed. No one man should get the entire credit," a philosophy that endeared him to his colleagues and ensured his contributions would continue to benefit humanity long after his passing in August 1948.

On the milestone of his 130th birth anniversary, I respectfully propose to the Indian Govt. that he be honored with the Bharat Ratna (posthumous) 2025.

(The author is Director, Vision Group of Institutions, Bengaluru)



RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

AFTER years of deliberations and several drafts, a comprehensive digital personal data protection law is closer to reality. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology released its regulations on the draft of the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules on January 5. The Act, which outlines how companies and government agencies should handle digital personal data, is open for consultation until February 18.

The Act was first introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 3, 2023, and was passed in the Lower House on August 7. It was then introduced in the Rajya Sabha on August 9 and passed the same day. It became the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, following the President's approval on August 11. The DPDP Act applies only to data processed digitally and does not apply to analogue data processing.

Why do we need a data protection law

Over the past decade, India has experienced exponential growth in digital adoption, with millions of people relying on online services and social media platforms for various aspects of their lives. The absence of a comprehensive data protection law in India has left citizens vulnerable to data breaches, identity theft, and other forms of cyber exploitation. The DPDP Act 2023 aims to address these concerns by providing a clear framework for data protection. It ensures that companies obtain permission before collecting and using personal data. It also mandates that they collect only the data necessary for their operations and take adequate

HOW THE DATA PROTECTION ACT WILL IMPACT YOU, PERSONALLY



measures to keep personal data safe and secure.

Built-in protection

The Act mandates that digital platforms get user permission before using their personal information. These platforms must also provide clear ways for users to withdraw their consent, access information about how their data is being used, update or delete their data, address grievances, nominate representatives, and file complaints with the Data Protection Board (DPB). Platforms can also use independent consent

managers to help collect and manage user permissions. In the event of a data leak, companies must inform individuals within a specified timeframe about its extent and the steps to contain it.

Working process

A data principal — any child or adult — gives consent through a consent manager. A consent manager is a registered person or entity with the DPB, acting as a single point of contact to help individuals give, manage, review, and withdraw consent using an accessible, transparent, and interoperable platform. The consent manager serves as an intermediary to facilitate the consent process. This role is similar to that of account aggregators under the Reserve Bank of India's guidelines.

The content so collected is processed by a data fiduciary, which is any person or organisation that determines the purpose and means of processing personal data. Non-compliance with the DPDP Rules could result in fines ranging from ₹50 crore to ₹250 crore, depending on the severity of the violation, as outlined in the DPDP Act.

Data retention span

Under the provisions, if a data fiduciary processes personal data for various purposes and the data principal (individual) does not interact with the fiduciary within a specified period, the personal data must be erased unless required for legal compliance. The retention period varies depending on the type of data fiduciary, such as e-commerce platforms, online gaming intermediaries, or social media companies.

These entities can retain personal data for up to three years from the last interaction or the effective date of the rules, which

ever is later, unless the data is needed for account access or virtual tokens. Before erasing the data, companies must notify individuals at least 48 hours in advance, allowing them to log in or contact the fiduciary if they wish to retain their data.

Significant data fiduciaries

The Act outlines specific responsibilities for significant data fiduciaries, which include companies like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Google, Bing, and e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart. These entities process large volumes of personal data, have a significant impact on individuals' rights, or operate in critical sectors. The key obligations for significant data fiduciaries include regularly assessing the risks to individuals' rights from their data processing activities, conducting annual audits, and reporting to the Data Protection Board and other relevant authorities.

Data Protection Board

To ensure the proper implementation of the DPDP Act, the government will establish a Data Protection Board (DPB). The board will play a key role in balancing the rights of individuals (data principals) and the responsibilities of companies (data fiduciaries). The DPB will mainly operate online, focusing on efficiency and accessibility. It will handle complaints about data breaches, ensure companies follow data protection rules, and monitor companies for compliance.

If a company fails to comply, the board can issue orders, suspend their operations, or revoke their registration. Individuals unhappy with the DPB's decisions can approach the appellate tribunal. Appeals must be filed digitally.

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